

THE ARGOSY.

DECEMBER, 1877.

GABRIEL'S APPOINTMENT.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE WELL AT LOWLEVELS.

WE have described one experience of travel in Devonshire in the teeth of a south-west gale; let us look now at another, under a calm summer moon. The wildness of the storm, the beating of the rain, were the welcome which greeted youth and love in the persons of Joel Treherne and his bride; the cool night air, the clear sky, and the quiet moonlight, were reserved for a traveller of another stamp—one, to whom every feature of the scenery was only too familiar.

He had traversed thousands of miles, by land and sea, since his last visit to Level Bridge; but on leaving the railway at Longmorton, he at once struck across the country with a decision that showed how vividly it was stamped on his memory. Dressed like a French sailor, and swinging a stick with a bundle over his shoulder, there was little about him to recall the smart, obsequious courier of Naples and Pæstum. He was not sorry when he found himself at last at the gate of Widow Cheveril's cottage. The sound of voices, as of people coming down the garden path, made him instinctively draw into the shadow, whence he could see without being seen. Dr. Nelson was speaking of the old woman's condition to Mrs. Medland, whose voluminous comments he cut short by peremptory orders to give her the wine that would be sent; and another man's voice, taking up the subject, promised that the wine itself should be sent round directly by her son—if he was to be trusted. A burst of enthusiasm over the goodness of the gentlemen who had converted poor Bob, and saved honest, hard-working people like her and her husband, from disgrace in their old age, was Mrs. Medland's response; but before it was well ended, the friends, for such Frank Nelson and

Gabriel Bruce had already become, had walked briskly away, and another voice, issuing from the darkness, made the good woman start as if she had been shot.

"Can you take a tired traveller in, Mrs. Medland, for old acquaintance sake?"

If an old acquaintance, it was pretty certain that he was not considered a desirable one, for the woman shook from head to foot, and gave a wild glance round, as if in quest of means of escape. He stepped easily forward, lifting the low-crowned hat from his black curls, and motioned politely to her to lead the way; which she immediately did, cowed even into silence. Her husband, who met them at the door, recognised the unwelcome guest. A deeply muttered oath was his first greeting; his second, the remark, "So *you've* turned up again, have you?"

"Everything does, if you wait long enough, my dear friend; I am charmed to see you both in such excellent health; and, since you make me so welcome, I shall feel obliged by a little supper and a glass of ale as quickly as convenient."

They exchanged looks, and without further parleying, fulfilled his orders; supper was produced, and liquor of various kinds; and while Medland played the host, his wife was getting ready the room where Darch Williams had lodged—fervently wishing that the first sleep her guest enjoyed on that pillow was to be his last.

Wishes, however, being of little avail just then, she quickened her preparations, in order to be present at the colloquy between him and her husband; but remembering the doctor's injunctions, and that it might be very inconvenient to lose old Mrs. Cheveril for want of care, she took a look at her as she went by.

The old woman, now bed-ridden, and only conscious at intervals, was lying with her eyes wide open, and her brow knit in the act of listening. As Mrs. Medland approached, it was with a sensation of superstitious fear that she heard her ask, "Why don't you bring him to me? Have I the time to lose that you throw away?"

"Dear heart, Mrs. Cheveril! Who is it you want to see?"

"That man who came just now—he buried my poor Jack—and I have something to tell him in return. No one ever did old Bess a kindness that she did not repay—no, nor ever served her an ill turn that they weren't sorry for afterwards—do you mind that?" she continued, with sharpness. "Then go and do as I bid you, and bring him in to me."

The strange guest was not a little startled at the message: but after considering a minute or two, he threw down his knife and fork.

"Keep the dish hot," he said, "there is no old woman whose words could spoil my appetite. I remember her perfectly."

Mrs. Medland showed him into the old woman's room. "They are just a pair of them," she muttered to herself, "and if they would only choke each other, one might be thankful. But as there's no

trusting such a man, it's one's duty to be on the watch, and hear what goes on." And she squeezed herself into a closet, at the back of the bed. By whatever mysterious faculty Mrs. Cheveril had detected his presence in the house, she was unable to separate his image from that of Joel, over whose words she had brooded ever since they were spoken. She at once began to talk of her poor lad, and the place where he was buried, and that she should soon be buried herself—but that she should never be released till she had told what she knew.

"And he that laid my boy in the grave is the fit man to hear it, and the message. Did you hear of the Craggs Court affair?"

Tonio nodded, drawing his breath a little harder.

"It were two of them did it; Joe Hughes, and my Jack. Hughes was his cousin, and led him on; they believed old Oram had a deal of money and they meant to get it quietly while he was asleep, but they found him up, busy over some papers, with a secret cupboard open that nobody knew of, and there they found the treasure, you see. And the old man fought hard for it, and so got badly hurt; but they managed so well, no one thought of laying it upon them. And when it came out that they had been his death, my Jack took it so to heart, he carried off his share of the plunder—ah! he had seen it before, and knew it well—and brought it down here, meaning to go and confess all, and give it up to her it belonged to; but his heart failed him, and he was well-nigh beside himself, and he hid the parcel away, wrapped up in oilskin, down yonder, at Lowlevels."

"And can you tell me where, my good lady?" he asked, his eyes glittering with excitement and cupidity.

"Yes, I can tell you that too, and there's many would have been glad enough to know it. The thing got whispered about, and more than one has tried his luck, but to no good. There was one who did murder, or next door to it, they say—I should like to think he had got what he deserved, but he'll have it, never fear."

"Now, hag that thou art," muttered he, "it would cost me little to stop thy tongue, only I have not heard all yet. Good dame," he continued as before, "you have not yet told me where to find it." But a change came over the withered face, and she looked wildly round as if some one had come into the room.

"Who was that?"

He tried in vain to reassure her, and bring her back to her story; the stream of thought had become confused, and she only rambled feebly, and at last closed her eyes. With an execration on her stupidity, he left the room so suddenly that he ran against Mrs. Medland, just emerging from her hiding-place. They looked in each other's eyes, and he saw directly that she knew something more.

"Your good lady is gone to sleep, and I may finish my supper. Is your son come yet with the wine?"

"I hear him talking to his father. You don't mean to be hard upon him, Mr. Tonio, I'm sure."

"Hard? Oh, no. I am soft as down—I only want to rub up his memory a little—and yours, just as sauce to the meat, you know."

"Suppose I know what you want—and that I can help you find it? Look here, that old lady talked once before, and I happened to hear what she said."

"That was clever. It shall be more so if you tell me."

"Come and finish your supper, then, and we'll talk it over," said she, shrewd enough to perceive her advantage, and determined to drive as good a bargain as possible, without offending this dangerous guest. Their return interrupted the conversation of father and son; it drove all the redness out of Bob's face, and his teeth chattered in his head as Tonio made him an ironical bow.

"I give you joy, young man, on having learned to be honest and sober. A character is a grander thing than a fortune."

"Now, don'tee frighten him," said the mother, coaxingly, "and don't you be skeart, Bob. He only means to ask you questions."

"Questions for his good entirely," said the smiling guest, as he took his seat at the table, and resumed his attack on the viands. "First of all, is there anyone here who forgets how certain silver spoons were missing at Highlevels, and an innocent maidservant was sent away on suspicion, while all the while they were in the pocket of my young friend—hein?"

"We paid you for that long ago," growled the old man.

"You paid me for silence. Have I not been silent? But father, mother, son, you be all in the same boat."

"You wouldn't—" began Bob, piteously, but his mother spoke.

"He knows well enough, Bob, that he can make nothing out of us in that way, and he won't try it. Why not be friends, and all work together? He ain't the only one as knows a thing or two."

The guest remarked that the good lady was right, as ladies generally were; and that he, for his part, would never turn against a friend. Bob drew a freer breath on hearing this, and he led him on to talk of his place, and the life he led in it, and the change since Mr. Bruce and the ladies had come down. Partly from nervousness, partly to show himself friendly, young Medland's tongue ran on nearly as glibly as his mother's, telling how hard he had worked, under Mr. Treherne, to put the place in order, and how Mrs. Carroll was so delighted with it, she declared she should study gardening, and live on her own potatoes—and she had made Joel tell her a deal about sowing and planting, because she said one never knew what might happen, and she wanted to be ready. And he had heard Joel and Lucy talking, that Mrs. Carroll had been sent down because her husband expected a smash in London, and did not want her to be in it, but to keep it from her. And Mrs. Bruce had told Ellis that most likely they should lose half their money, and so they must begin

to be economical, instead of letting the Captain spend with both hands, as he liked to do. A noble lady was Mrs. Bruce, the beautifullest he had ever seen; and to look at her, you'd never suppose she could go right up to a foreign brigand, and shoot him with his own gun. Anyhow, she was rather a nervous lady, and Mr. Bruce and Joel went round the house every night, to make sure there was nothing likely to give her a turn.

Had anything been heard or seen lately?

No. Since the trick of the clock came out, there was no chance for anyone—and Medland wouldn't advise its being tried. Something had been found, though; for in clearing away a pile of rubbish, they had come upon a covered well, half filled up, and Mr. Bruce was going to show it to the doctor.

A covered well? How long had it been filled up?

That Bob couldn't say, but they supposed it was done when the repairs were going on. Dear me, was that the clock? He must be off, or Joel would be down upon him—they kept him to hours pretty strict. And Bob got up to depart, evidently anxious to be out of reach of more questions. His father went with him to the gate; his mother was left with their lodger.

"Did you hear what he said about the well?" she whispered.

"Yes. What of it?"

"What will you give me first? You've only said hard things, so far, and you'll get nothing out of me that way."

He nodded, and pulled out some pawnbroker's tickets.

"Do you remember these?"

The report of Bob Medland was so far accurate that Tiny, whose state of health kept them all a little anxious, was quite guiltless herself of any real anxiety, and thoroughly enjoyed what she called retrenchment and economy, which, at present, only meant freedom from housekeeping. It had been a stretch of virtue to give up the house in Greville Gardens, and she felt entitled to all the reward which used in the old story books to be reserved for the good people who retired from the world of London to milk their own cows in Devonshire. That she should ever quite reach that height of excellence, unless cows adopted more reasonable hours, she was inclined to doubt; but in every other respect she was convinced that nature intended her for a hermit—she was so charmed with Joel's herbs and fruits, and Gabriel's trout, and the cream that was Lucy's pride; and only longed for the fuss about business to be over, that Hartley might come down and take them about on the moors. There always had been times of worry, ever since she married, and this only seemed like a worse season than usual; and now they had so reduced their expenses, and Hartley had Mr. Herbert to advise him, she took it for granted that all would soon come right.

Hartley Carroll's present danger had been brought on by some

rash speculations into which Sir Jesse Strahan had led him, and his utmost exertions, with Gabriel's help, had only partially secured him from what had nearly been utter ruin. With the energy of a nature that, habitually easy and careless, could be roused on occasion to tremendous efforts, Hartley was doing all that man could do to prepare for the coming storm—looking into everything himself, and stimulating those under him by example and appeals to their loyalty, till they hardly believed they were in the same place. He wrote every day to his wife, but always in his gay careless style, which disguised what he was really suffering.

As may easily be supposed, the acquaintance with Dr. Nelson led to many a discussion over the mystery of his wife's last illness, a subject in which another person took the keenest interest. This was Philip Forrest, who, having suddenly broken down over his work, had come to Level Bridge to help the Canon, and recruit himself at the same time with the pure moorland air. He had a room at a farmhouse; but he could not resist the attraction of Gabriel's society, and was often in and out, taking a share in all the consultations, and bent on discovering by whom, and in what manner, the cruel wrong had been inflicted which had scathed the happiness of poor Frank.

It appeared that the clock, with some other articles, was purchased by Dr. Nelson with the house, and he had been much startled by Martin's discovery of the passage behind. Of course, this had since been carefully examined, but it was found so choked with stones and rubbish, that it would require the assistance of workmen to make it clear. On discovering the well, it struck Gabriel that they might perhaps find there the clue to the mystery. His belief was, that the passage in the house communicated with the well, and had been formerly used either as a drain, or as a means of conveying the water, and he began to calculate the time it would take to clear it out; which, when Joel overheard, he shook his head with his low warning whistle. If he would only wait till the Ironhand came down, they would begin upon it themselves; for that matter, he had a good mind to begin to-morrow. And so he would have done, but for a downpour of rain, to which even his energy was fain to yield, and which lasted for a couple of days. It was not without its utility, for the cover having been removed from the well, the water rushed through the earth and loosened the stones, and when he was able to commence operations, he was not long in clearing the mouth of the well to the depth of a couple of feet. The next discovery was that there was a ledge in the masonry, on which some planks had been laid across, supporting the earth and rubbish, so as to give it the appearance of being filled from the bottom; a discovery promising to lighten his labours, but still more to present the key to the sibyl's oracle, which had taken as great a hold of his fancy as of Mrs. Medland's.

"I wonder what little Miss would say to such a find as this," he observed to his satellite Bob, as he pulled off his jacket in the

morning sun, and poised his pickaxe in his powerful hands, before beginning to work.

Bob started at the remark. "Do you think you'll find gold?" he said, in a tone of awe.

"Gold! Bless your innocence, you're no wiser about gold-finding than Missy herself. Did you really think we dug up a nugget among the apple trees?"

"Didn't you, then? Why, Mrs. Bilson said you did."

"Then don't you be in a hurry to believe her. The Ironhand had one to his watch-chain, and he passed it on to me, and we humoured the poor little maid, seeing she was not quite like other people. A nice object you were that day, I remember."

"I wish you were all in the well—I wish I had never seen any of you—I wish I was dead!" and Bob burst out crying.

"So!" remarked Joel, "someone has been treating you, I see. What did they want out of you?"

"Are you going to turn me off, Mr. Treherne? You said you would the next time I drank."

"Do you want to go?"

"I'd give the world to be a hundred miles off."

Joel laid down his pickaxe, took his assistant by the shoulder, and put him into the tool-house, with his back to the wall.

"Now then, tell the truth, or I'll shake it out of you. What is it?"

"Oh, don't speak so sharp to me, Mr. Treherne. It's my old sin finding me out, that's what it is, sir. I wish Mr. Martin was here."

"Joel! Joel! A telegram! You're wanted this minute!" cried Lucy's voice.

Joel stood one second irresolute; then whistled for Settler, and ordered him to watch. The dog seemed quite to understand, and lay down, eyeing Medland significantly.

"You just stay there till I come back," was Joel's parting admonition; and he strode back to the house just as Gabriel was coming to look for him. The whole household was gathered together in the hall, and the yellow paper in Mr. Bruce's hand was as follows:—

"Hartley Carroll to Gabriel Bruce.

"The Ironhand in trouble. Your evidence and Joel's wanted directly."

"Do you see what that means, Joel?"

"Yes, sir; it must all come out now."

"Then run off to Level Bridge, and bring back a trap."

Joel departed on his errand. Later arrived Philip Forrest, shouldering a carpet-bag, with a boy carrying his portmanteau.

"I've come to say, Mrs. Bruce, I want to change my lodging. Can you take me in?"

She was only too thankful, though she tried to conceal the thankfulness from her husband. Bruce's welcome was no less hearty. His

preparations and Joel's did not take very long, and the latter had time to let out Settler's captive, and take him aside for a few serious words.

"Now then," he said, "look here. You talk of your sin finding you out, when it seems you just go and put yourself in its way. You've got a chance now, and if you use it, you'll make friends for life, and start afresh for a course like an honest fellow. Mr. Bruce and I are obliged to go to town, leaving our wives behind. Will you stick to them, like a man? Will you pitch all treats, and tips, and threats back into the teeth of anyone who gives them, and do your duty by the women, God helping you? Don't think twice about it, but if you will, give me your hand."

"I will, Mr. Treherne—I will indeed. God bless you for speaking to me like that. It puts new heart into a fellow."

"High time it did. Mr. Forrest is in the house, and the doctor will have his eye upon it, and they will report how you keep your word. There, get on with your gardening like a man."

He went into the kitchen, told the state of the case to Mrs. Ellis and his wife, and exhorted them to extra watchfulness and courage; then begged leave to speak to his mistress. She admitted him directly, and in Gabriel's presence he told her plainly that he did not at all like leaving the house unprotected, and so he had made bold to ask Mr. Forrest to garrison it in their absence. Edith was startled—she could not deny it—but she recovered herself directly she saw the distress in Gabriel's face. Joel had done quite right. And so long as nothing was said to frighten Mrs. Carroll, Edith promised them courage should not be wanting to keep the Castle Dangerous while its lord was away.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DARCH MAKES A DEPOSITION.

IF Mr. Plummer's proposal to undertake Martin's defence took his principal, Sir Jesse, by surprise, it was only for the first moment. His brow smoothed its wrinkles into bland serenity, as he expressed his satisfaction in the arrangement; but Mr. Plummer saw that whatever he had intended before, his doom was sealed.

"I will read the deposition of the man Williams aloud, if you please, and take a copy of it. Is it in your handwriting, Sir Jesse?"

"It is; he was too ill to write."

"But his senses must be clear, to dictate all this?"

"He had recovered consciousness. He is now asleep."

"There is no fear of his eluding justice, I presume?"

"He is watched by a nurse: and he could not leave the house without assistance."

The lawyer glanced at the paper, gave Martin a warning sign, and read aloud as follows:

"When did I first see the Ironhand? Why, at the store kept by Mr. Bruce, on the way to the Wambiloa diggings; but I had heard of him before as a sharp hand, and I wanted to buy him over. He had been in the mounted police, and knew more than was good for him. I wanted a mate of his sort, and I watched for a chance of 'listing him, and got it at last."

"I should like to know where," remarked Martin.

"My dear sir, your curiosity is natural, but there is more of interest to come, if you will let me proceed."

"I had heard talk among the diggers of two fellows who had been missing ever since they went off into the bush, and were supposed to have some valuable plunder about them—which they had brought from England. More than one had tried to strike their trail, on the chance of finding the prize, and a poor crazy chap whom we picked up, half starving, was for ever starting off to look for it, and coming back dead beat, to be laughed at for his pains. Martin and I got talking about it, and he said it would be worth while to try, and we agreed, at last, to go shares in whatever we found. It came to nothing that time, and it was some months later when I saw him again, in another part of the country. He told me the captain had found the treasure, and carried it always about him, and as they were going home at once he could do nothing about getting hold of it, but if I would run the risk, he would keep a look out, and give me warning—and we were to share and share alike when all was done. He's a close fist at a bargain, but he kept his word, for I had a hint from him several times, always worth taking."

"I should like to give him another," said Martin. "Does anyone in the room believe this fellow?"

"Do not ask questions, my friend," said Sir Jesse. "All we have to do is to get at the truth."

"This is digging for gold among the apple trees with a vengeance," muttered the hunter; but he resolved to listen to the end.

The reading was resumed, but we will only give its purport. This theory of Martin's co-operation explained all the proceedings which have been related already. He had first given Wily Wilkins notice of the ship they sailed in—then, when Mr. Bruce changed his mind and his route, and the pursuer followed them to Paris, he and Martin had a word together in the train, and it was by the hunter's assistance that Darch gave Joel the slip. At the hotel, accident alone prevented his entering the captain's room at night, to try the effect of a little chloroform; then he heard from the Ironhand that he and Joel were going into the country, and the job had better be done in their absence. One of his mates tried it on in the train, but failed. Then Martin went away again, and the fire at the school was got up, and nearly answered, but luck was against them again, and they began to think it a bad job. However, he went down to consult the Ironhand, and heard from him about Mrs.

Salisbury's diamonds, and they came to an agreement that if Darch could get hold of them, and replace them in their setting with false stones, Martin should restore the box, and touch the reward. This trick had been cleverly managed, and Darch was hard at work over his imitations, when the Ironhand came down upon him, and claimed more than his share. They had high words, and a blow was given him—perhaps harder than was meant, but he hoped to repay it some day.

So ingeniously was all this put together, that to those who were not in the secret, the case looked singularly ugly. Martin sat with his arms folded, and his eyes looking steadily before him; "very dangerously quiet," as Burns thought to himself. Perhaps at the moment, he was less dangerous than he looked, for his thoughts had flown back to old days with Gabriel Bruce, the first glow of love his heart had felt for this friend, so unlike anyone he had known before—the perfect trust between them, proved in so many actions—the consciousness that life would be a blank without Gabriel's face, which had induced him to leave freedom and the woods for the stranger world of England; and the new, brighter, nobler visions which had risen upon him there.

The superintendent's voice was the first to break the silence. "The jewel-box is here, I suppose. Let us have a look at it."

The canvas package was placed on the table. It had already been opened, Sir Jesse explained, but the contents had been left undisturbed. The general appearance of the ornaments confirmed the statement of Darch Williams, most of the stones having been loosened from their setting and were lying by themselves, wrapped up in pieces of wash-leather. On counting them over, it was found that several were missing. The superintendent nodded his head.

"How many diamonds may you have about you?" he asked Martin, turning round upon him suddenly.

The hunter was silent.

"Come, my friend," said Sir Jesse, "you will do yourself no good by evasion. Sooner or later, it must all come out. Your bush cleverness will hardly avail you here."

Martin saw that Mr. Plummer, though busily writing, was keenly listening for his answer, and that Burns had come a step nearer. He deliberately unfastened his shirt-collar, and took from his neck a small steel purse, at the end of a chain of the same metal.

"Be so good, all of you, as to bear witness that I show these of my own free will," he said; "there are three diamonds here, and very splendid ones they are. Mr. Bruce and Joel have the rest. This was the treasure we found; and we agreed to take care of it amongst us, until we could restore it to its owner."

All Sir Jesse's powers of dissimulation could not conceal the excitement he felt at the sight of these stones. His hand shook as he took them up; his breath came quick and short. However, he

allowed the superintendent to examine and compare these gems with the others. They seemed exactly to fit the setting of part of the necklace.

"You say you brought these from Australia, do you?"

"Yes, and I appeal to the testimony of Mr. Bruce, my master, and Joel Treherne, my fellow-servant. If you please, I will tell you the whole story, and Mr. Plummer will kindly write it down."

"Stop," said Sir Jesse, hurriedly, "with the superintendent's leave, I submit that this is too serious a matter to be done in a hurry. For the young man's own sake, we should wait for Mr. Bruce's coming. To-morrow we will telegraph for him: and meanwhile, I will be answerable for the appearance of the Ironhand, as well as of Darch Williams. A bedroom will be at your service, Mr. Martin, and Burns will attend you. I know you will not allow me to be compromised, and you shall have every indulgence you may require. These valuables must be sealed up for the night, and I am afraid your prize must be detained among them, until their story is more clearly explained."

He brought out wax as he spoke, and rapidly sealed up the package with his own large seal, then made the superintendent and Martin each add one of theirs. At the sight of that used by the latter, he could not help uttering an exclamation of surprise.

"Who gave you that?"

But at this moment, a message was delivered to Sir Jesse. Mr. Carroll had called on pressing business.

When the Ironhand was arrested, and Bill Close started homewards to report what he had seen, his first idea was to find Mr. Forrest; but hearing that he might not be in for some hours, he went off to Mr. Carroll's house of business, where he had already been several times on messages. Luckily, Hartley was there, and though really very busy, his good nature made him at once listen carelessly to Bill's story. When it came, however, to the description of the house to which the Ironhand had been taken, his face became grave and attentive. Calling for a hansom, and taking the boy with him, he drove to the Mission-house, to learn where David was gone. With some difficulty, they traced him at last to old Martin's; and Hartley, for the first time in his life, found himself ascending the staircase of a model lodging-house, wondering, as he did so, how Tiny would like that sort of thing, should they all go to smash. A woman with a tray in her hands was crossing the passage, and stopped short at sight of him.

"Mr. Carroll—you here, sir? Is anything the matter?"

"Stop a minute—I ought to know your face—you are Grace Pyne, are you not? That is all right, for you may be able to help us. I am anxious about the Ironhand—the police have taken him to Sir Jesse Strahan's."

She uttered a faint cry, begged him to wait, and hurried in with her tray. David Forrest came out.

"Carroll, what is all this?"

"That you must help me find out. Bill Close, your favourite pupil, was at some mischief or other in Paradise Row, and saw a crowd round one of the doors, as there had been one row, and might be another. He saw Martin come out with the doctor, and get into his brougham, while a doubtful-looking man mounted the box by the driver—evidently a policeman in plain clothes. He says the Ironhand made him a sign—one of a series he seems to have taught him—meaning that he was to take notice where he went, and the youngster tracked him to Strahan's house in —— Square. Now, for Strahan to have been mixed up in it at all, there must have been some ugly reason, and I am more anxious than I can quite account for. My own belief is that the carriage was Strahan's own, and he was the doctor: which makes the matter worse."

"You make me anxious too. Come in; my old friend here may perhaps give us some advice."

He led Mr. Carroll into the room, where old Erasmus Martin, looking very feeble, was sitting as usual in his easy-chair. A few words were enough to light up his sunken eyes with a keen intelligence that charmed Hartley directly.

"Grace, my girl!" said the old man.

She came forward, looking very pale, but calm and resolute.

"Have you heard anything of this?"

"No, Mr. Martin: but I see what has happened. All must come to light now, only don't let the brave young gentleman suffer for keeping his promise to me. He promised, if he could see poor Darch, that he would try and save him, and I know he has tried.

"He has evidently been followed, and taken up as an accomplice. Don't cry, my woman—we'll see if we can't save them both. At any rate, the son of my dearest friend shall not suffer as his father did, if an old man's voice can save him. Yes, gentlemen—so it is; if I had not been afraid of offending and driving him away, I should have spoken sooner. That young man, Martin, is my godson—I was his father's confidential clerk, and served him faithfully, and was liberally repaid. That I live as you see me here is owing to him. He called his boy after me, and when he fled the country to bury himself in the wilderness, he seems to have taken my name. It was that which made me think of it at first; but when the dear lad came to see me, and understood that lock which Mr. Desmond invented, and no one else could put in order—I knew who he must be. The things he has told me—his age, his father's habits—the year he died—all agree—there is no doubt in my own mind, that he is the son of Desmond Moreton; and I may hope now to see him owned. But you will have to be careful, gentlemen; if he takes the alarm, he will escape you all. He has been impressed with the fact that he can never hold up his head among you as your equal, and he will never bear to be put to shame. Don't let him think that, or he is lost. Tell him

only to be patient; there is much to be told and explained, which has never been made public yet, but for which I believe God's mercy has kept me alive, when I have often longed to be at rest."

"Well, Carroll, is there anything I can do to serve you?" asked Sir Jesse, when, after sufficient delay to make Hartley very impatient, he entered the dining-room, into which the guest had been shown. "I was rather anxious about you by the look of affairs. There were ugly stories afloat this morning."

"There is always something ugly if you look out for it," said Hartley, "but the ugliest thing I know at this minute is the chance of my dinner being spoiled. Just let the Ironhand know I'm waiting for him, will you?"

"The Ironhand? You have heard what has taken place?"

"I heard that you had brought him here in your carriage, so I am come to fetch him away in my own hackney coach. Seriously; if, in his ignorance of London, he has got into a scrape, I want to see him well out of it. What is the matter?"

"Sit down, and you shall hear. I hope it is ignorance, but it looks like something else. You remember our talking about him at your table, and Burlington Ford's remarks?"

"Quite well, and like many of Burlington's oracular sentences, I thought them entirely unfounded. According to his theory, we are all fools or rogues."

"However that may be, my suspicions once aroused, I could not help observing the fellow more narrowly, and there was something so strange about that Italian business, after what had gone before, that I had him watched, and to-day's work is the result."

He described the condition in which the jewels had been discovered, confirming the statement of Darch Williams, which he gave Hartley to read; and observed that three of the lost gems had just been found on Martin's own person. Hartley whistled on hearing this. Appealed to Bruce, had he? That could soon be settled, as he would telegraph to him the first thing in the morning.

"Meanwhile, Strahan, if I were you, I would be in no hurry to form my judgment. Supposing this precious confession to be true, they are a pair of the biggest rascals unhung, and I should be sorry to have that said of anyone belonging to me."

"That is no fault of mine. If Mr. Bruce is annoyed, I cannot help it."

"Bruce, my dear fellow? It is of you and Mrs. Salisbury I am thinking. He is her grandson—your nephew—the only son of Desmond Moreton."

"How—how dare you, Carroll?" began Sir Jesse, his face one blaze of passion at what he took for mockery. But Hartley coolly cut him short.

"It is no question of daring, but of identity. There is an old clerk of Moreton's in the city, who can prove it to your thorough satisfaction."

"But Moreton himself is not living?" The words came out with difficulty, the flash of anger having changed to a ghastly paleness.

"No, he died some years ago, and Erasmus, who was so named after the old clerk, was left to his own devices, not knowing to this day to what family he belongs, but having been told by his father that he could never be a gentleman. What that meant, perhaps you know better than I do."

Sir Jesse turned to the sideboard, and poured out some wine with such tremulous haste that Hartley almost expected to see him drop the glass. It seemed to answer his purpose, for he made a slight apology, observing that he had been a little upset before, and this had almost overcome him. If this story were true—what a miserable position the young man would be in—what a shock awaited his excellent grandmother! The loss of the diamonds themselves would be nothing to the agony of thinking that he had been mixed up in the affair; it was enough to kill her at once.

"For that matter," said Hartley, "I should as soon think of suspecting Alice Kerr, who painted them. Where is he? I should like him to know that there is some one in the house who prefers taking his word to that of a rogue."

"You shall see him if he will be seen," said Sir Jesse, biting his lip as he withdrew. Presently he returned, shaking his head.

"If pride and wilfulness are proofs of his being Desmond's son, he has quite enough to satisfy anybody. Nothing will induce him to face you, until he is cleared by the evidence of Bruce and Joel. I have promised he shall do as he pleases, and you had better meet Bruce here to-morrow. There is no doubt of his coming."

"He holds his servant in higher estimation than you hold your nephew. A hint that he is in trouble will be quite enough."

"You speak irritably, Carroll, and I can allow for that, considering how you are worried. You would despise advice from me now, so I do not give it. But look that over at your leisure," added Sir Jesse, kindly, putting some papers into his hand, and taking leave with the cordiality of former intercourse.

"He has sunk every farthing of his own money, and much of Bruce's into the bargain," thought Sir Jesse, when alone, "but this will set his shallow brain working, and he'll come back, I know. I have good reason for strengthening all my defences. Of course this story is true—the fellow has Desmond's own seal that I gave him myself, just like my own." He took one out of a drawer and eyed it closely. "Yes, here is the Tiberius head—I remember the place where I bought them both, and the day as if it were yesterday—what weather we had for Capri, to be sure! Strange to think how things come round. What has Plummer been about, that I was not told all this before?"

He rang the bell, and requested that Mr. Plummer would come and speak to him for a moment; thanked him, on his entrance, for the skilful manner in which he had prevented any imputation of unfair-

ness from resting on the proceedings, and requested he would return early the next day, to resume the charge of young Martin's interests—interests nearer to his own than were generally supposed. The wary lawyer bowed, accepted all the civility, even to the glass of wine which was pressed upon him before his departure, and took his leave, wondering from what quarter the storm would blow.

His uncertainty was soon removed. On his way home he was arrested for an old debt, which his kind patron had bought up some time before.

Declining all offers of refreshment, and weary in mind and body, the hunter had flung himself on the bed, and fallen fast asleep. Burns, seated in an arm-chair, had with difficulty refrained from following his example; and was watching him enviously, when Sir Jesse entered, and told him he might get some rest in another room; he would relieve him of his charge for an hour. Martin's dreams were presently disturbed by a hand on his shoulder; he found his host bending over him with a look of deep interest, quite free from the taunting superiority of the previous evening. Without expressing any surprise, but certain that something was coming for which he was not prepared, Erasmus rose immediately, and assumed an attitude of attention. For aught he knew, they might want to take him before a magistrate, and he only wished he understood more about English law, that he might be sure of his own rights, and defend them. He was soon undeceived; Sir Jesse only wished to be looked upon as his friend, by right of the connection between them, just discovered. No one but himself, he felt, ought to be the one to acknowledge Desmond Moreton's son; for no one knew, as he did, why that acknowledgment was necessary. He had time to tell the tale, to say all that he had planned, for even when all the evidence was before him, it seemed as if the hunter could hardly believe, or at any rate realise, what he heard. Gradually, as his own recollection confirmed the proofs, by showing that they offered the only clue to conduct of his father's which had been the enigma of his life, he ceased to contend or to question, but sat with his arms resting on his knees, and his eyes fixed on the ground, struggling against the strange new emotion that was rising to overwhelm his soul.

His father's home—his father's mother—with what a yearning tenderness he thought of them at that moment can only be imagined by remembering that he had till then believed himself alone in the world, and knew kindred only by seeing what it could be to others. The atmosphere of the room, the restraint of the four walls, became almost oppressive; he longed to rush out into the open air, and give vent to this choking excitement, which made him tremble like a woman, and dimmed his eyes with moisture—he could not tell why. Sir Jesse's voice sounded in his ears without conveying meaning to his brain, until he suddenly became aware that he was giving him to

understand how great the shock of the discovery would be to Mrs. Salisbury—how terribly it would recall the sad story of her son's disappearance—a story they had all tried to make her forget. Forget? He had himself forgotten that between him and an honoured name lay the gulf of which his father had spoken—at any rate, now he must, and would, learn what that was, and this man should tell him, if he had to drag it from him by force. He stood erect before Sir Jesse, and the latter almost recoiled from the fierceness of the glowing eye and pointed finger.

"Sir, you have not told me all this, to mock me with words that mean nothing. If you are my uncle, you must know that any disgrace of mine must be shared by my relations. Tell me in plain words, as you are a gentleman, what is the charge against my father? What was it he did? Was it not a fancy of his brain—brought on by over-work, that he was—what he called himself—what no one else had better call him when I am by?"

"This is not the tone in which such questions should be asked, Erasmus. But I pity you too much to be offended. Your father's brain may have suffered later, but he knew what he was doing, when he ruined himself by speculations, and then defrauded a lady to whom he was trustee, in the attempt to recover his losses. The old friendship between him and her family prevented any public exposure, but the story got abroad, and he could never have held up his head in society again. The lady herself has been dead some time, but the consequences were felt by her son. No, I have not mentioned him."

"Not mentioned what? I will hear every word! What do you think a man is made of?"

"You are hasty, sir, but I forgive it. I can feel for you. It is right you should know the truth—that the lady's maiden name was Wyatt—and she was the mother of Gabriel Bruce."

CHAPTER XXXVI.

SIR JESSE MAKES A MISTAKE.

SIR JESSE went back to his study, and sent for the nurse, to whose care Darch Williams had been entrusted on being brought to the house. She speedily appeared, in all the demure respectability of a black dress, and white cap and apron; and having at his sign closed the door behind her, stood curtsying to receive his orders.

"How is your patient, nurse?"

"His cough is easier, Sir Jesse, since he took the draught you sent him; but he is very restless and irritable himself—won't keep still a minute."

"I wonder at that ; the medicine ought to have made him sleep. A very little of it is enough for me."

"It's the pain he's in, perhaps, Sir Jesse. May be, a little more of it might quiet him—people are so different about these things."

"You shall have some more, if you think so ; but be careful, for it is a very strong preparation. Is he impatient of restraint ?"

"Dreadful, Sir Jesse. I had to promise he should go away the first thing to-morrow—just to please him."

"It must be very early then, Mrs. Bilson, for I shall not be able to protect him much longer. Could he be moved, do you think ?"

"Dear heart, yes, sir—why, he is walking up and down his room at this minute, though he turns faint again after a few turns, and has to lie down. If he could only get a little sleep, he might be stronger to go."

"He shall have another draught, and then he can try. I am not unmindful of your services, Mrs. Bilson, or of the risk you run in being mixed up with this unfortunate man, and I wish to protect you both. Do not interrupt me, if you please, for time is precious. The man's case demands surgical care, you understand ; and here is a letter to the — Hospital, and a sum in this purse to pay expenses. As soon as it is light, get him out of the house. Slade will be sitting up, to attend upon you, and will have a cab ready. Should you be questioned anywhere, or at any time, you will remember that I gave you the letter, and you can show it."

"I understand, Sir Jesse, perfectly."

"For your personal reward I have also made arrangements. Your brother, the emigration agent, is well known to me. Through him I shall always keep an eye upon you, wherever you go. As soon as I hear you and Williams are married and out of the country, I shall settle an annuity of fifty pounds upon you, which will be stopped directly either of you return. There is a vessel announced to start to-morrow evening. Your brother can secure your berths, and I leave the rest to you and him."

"You are very good, Sir Jesse," said the woman, trembling, but not daring to say more.

He took her acquiescence as a matter of course, and turned to unlock a cabinet, in which stood several small bottles with glass stoppers. Among these he was selecting the one required, when he thought he heard a sound, as if one of his designs was being carried out, and in the agitation of listening—for he was agitated in spite of himself—he forgot his usual caution, thrust the bottle into Bilson's hands without looking at it, and hurried her out of the room. Then he strode to a window in the neighbouring apartment, raised it cautiously, and listened again. Satisfied with the result, he sat down to write ; and about an hour later, Slade, who had been engaged in disposing of Mr. Plummer, returned to report progress and take further instructions. When these had been given, Sir Jesse rang for

his valet, Simmons, ordered the household to bed, and dismissed him for the night, as he had letters and accounts to finish, which would keep him up late. He might, indeed, have occasion to go out very early, but Slade would be in attendance, and he required no one else to sit up.

His orders were always meant to be obeyed to the letter, and even the privileged Simmons knew better than to disregard such a hint. By twelve o'clock the house was as still as if it had been empty.

Having ascertained that such was the case, Sir Jesse's next object was to examine the packet he had so carefully sealed, and which he as carefully re-opened, melting some of the wax with dexterous skill, so that he might replace the impressions when necessary. He had scarcely spread the contents before him, when he became aware of being either very tired or very faint, and that his sight was growing dizzy, a sensation to which he was not altogether a stranger, though it was some time since it last occurred. In point of fact, the day had been one of excessive fatigue and excitement, and he had scarcely tasted a morsel of food, so that it was no wonder he should feel exhausted. As his physician had warned him a couple of years before, nature would rebel if overtaxed, and he felt he had tried her a little too far. His first impulse was to open the door and call his trusted spy, now waiting in the hall; but he remembered the diamonds, and thought he would take a cordial first, which would give him strength to put them out of sight before summoning assistance. He did not stop to close the door again, for his giddiness was almost blinding. By a desperate effort he opened the cabinet, and felt for some ginger brandy which he always kept there in case of need. Too faint to do more, he drew out the stopper, put the bottle to his mouth, and, from the trembling of his hand, swallowed a larger portion than he intended. In an instant he became aware of the terrible mistake he had made. It was the powerful narcotic he had meant for Darch Williams.

The shock of the discovery for a moment roused his sinking energies; that he must immediately do something, he felt with an exquisite agony of terror such as he had never known in his whole life. If he had not been so mad as to frighten Erasmus away, he and Burns would have been close at hand. Perhaps, after all, they were not gone, and if they saved him he would make all right, and reward them handsomely; he would make friends with the young fellow and his grandmother, and atone for all bygones, if only—ah! that deadly sickness of heart that brought the cold dew all over his face. He had a vague consciousness that it might be his salvation if only proper remedies could be supplied in time—and he made one more hopeless struggle, but could only reach his easy-chair.

Once seated, the faintness seemed to diminish; and the relief was so great that he involuntarily yielded to the dangerous comfort. He would sit still for two minutes, and then ring up the servants, and send for his doctor. And, as may be imagined, he gradually sub-

sided into a doze, which passed into the heavy sleep from which no power of his own could arouse him.

In the meanwhile, his plans were being diligently worked out. Bilson had faithfully communicated to Darch the terms on which alone he could escape, and he had acquiesced with the half-sullen doggedness of one who had no choice. In flattering this woman's vanity for his own ends, he had in reality put himself so much in her power, that in his state of weakness and suffering he was fain to follow her humour, and keep her attached to his fortunes, until he saw a fair prospect of leaving her behind. He gnashed his teeth as he thought how little he had won by all his exertions; and secretly promised himself that when once safely out of reach of the law, he would see if he could not threaten his wealthy patron into making better terms.

"What have you got there?" he asked fretfully, as Bilson produced the bottle.

"The stuff for your cough. We must mind what we are about with it, as it is very strong, he says."

"Let me smell it." He took out the stopper, and very coolly swallowed a draught. "He was selling you—just like him. He hoped to kill me off with this; it is first-rate ginger brandy. Pack it up out of my sight; we shall be glad of it sooner or later."

Partly owing to the liquor, and partly to exhaustion, he fell asleep during Bilson's preparations for their departure; and when at last it was time to rouse him, his cough had again become so troublesome that she suggested it might be possible to get the opiate after all. She would just go quietly to the study door and see.

She went, and Darch waited, stifling his cough as well as he could. She soon returned, in breathless haste.

"Come and look at him—he is fast asleep; but it don't look all right to me."

He followed her into the study, where the man he had served and feared was reclining in his arm-chair, plunged in that deadly sleep.

"Seems as if he had taken something. There's a strong smell about: what is it?"

A hasty glance round the room soon showed the bottle, whose stopper had not been replaced. The woman's impulse was to run to the arm-chair and rouse the sleeper at all hazards; but Darch had seen something else which turned the scale as it trembled on the balance.

"Touch him if you dare!" he said, in a fierce whisper. "Do you think he'd spare you if you stood in his way? Let him bide, it is no affair of ours; help me to make sure of this. Quick, now, or that fellow below will hear!"

He had already regained the mastery, and she obeyed him—partly in dread of his anger, partly in selfish fear for herself, partly from cupidity: and the fatal gems were secured from observation in her

shawl. Keeping her eyes turned away from the sleeping man, she was about to put up the opiate, but Darch stopped her hand.

"That must stay as it is, to show how it happened. It is his own doing, not ours."

She shuddered, but made no reply. They left the room in silence: and all had been so carefully arranged for their escape, that they accomplished it in safety, leaving the miserable lord of the mansion face to face with his terrible doom.

The arrest of Martin and Darch had removed all Grace Pyne's fear of being recognized; should her evidence be required, she was ready to give it; and her anxiety for news brought her early to her old friend's room, knowing as she did how much the old man relied on her services. About ten o'clock they were surprised by a visit from Burns the spy, bringing a letter from Mr. Plummer, explanatory of his arrest, and asking for immediate relief, for Martin's sake. The old man's eyes kindled as he read, and he beckoned to Grace to give him his writing materials.

"I saved up money, year after year, with small hope of doing him any good by it; it is all at his service, principal and interest. Have you seen him to-day, Burns?"

"Well, yes; but I've lost sight of him now. I left him at the — Hospital, but he was gone when I got back."

"How was that? What took Martin there? Sit down, will you, and tell me all about it. I feared you would scare him away among you. If only he had come to me!"

"And so I think he meant to do, according to my advice. Well, thank you, I will sit down a bit, for I have been on my legs nearly all night. You see, when I found that Mr. Plummer was to be got out of the way for interfering, it began to look serious; I might be shunted next myself, and the young gentleman would be left without anyone to advise him."

"Was he told the truth?"

"That I can't say; but Sir Jesse came into the room when all was quiet, sent me to lie down, and talked to him for some time. By-and-by comes the young man to me, and wakes me out of my sleep, looking like some one who has had a mortal blow. 'Burns,' says he, quiet enough, 'I'm going out of this house directly; I can't stay another hour.'

"'Sir,' I said, 'if I may make so bold, what did he tell you?'

"'What the whole world will soon know,' he says, 'that my dead father robbed my dearest friend; and I cannot stay to hear that friend told of it, and to see my own flesh and blood ashamed of me.' I guessed at once why that had been put into his head, and I put two and two together, and I said, 'Well, sir, it seems to me, as matters stand, that the sooner you are out of the house the better. Surely,' I said, 'you have other friends to stand by you? I wouldn't take all for granted that you hear from a certain quarter, that may have his own

ends to answer in getting you out of the way.' 'All right,' he says, in his short way, 'only show me how to get out, or I must try the window.' 'You'll not do that, sir,' I said, 'because I must go with you, and that won't suit me. I promised to keep an eye upon you, but I had no orders to hinder your going where you pleased.' He gave me a strange kind of look, almost like a hunted wild thing, but he said no more, and I took him out of the house easy enough, for it was just what the gentleman wanted. I persuaded him, as I thought, to come and see you before he did anything rash, and I was bringing him the shortest way, thinking you'd be able to take him in for the night, when we were pulled up by finding ourselves in a crowd, pouring out of the Triumph Theatre. Have you seen the morning paper? There is an account of it all there. Women were shrieking and screaming, people fighting to get out; the police were trying to keep order, and assure them there was no danger but what they made themselves. The fact was, there had been an accident from the fall of some woodwork belonging to the stage, and the people thought the gallery was coming down, and some screamed out 'Fire!' and then you know how soon there is a rush. Mr. Martin looks round at me, and says, 'We must lend a hand, mate,' and I can't tell you how pleased I was when he called me that; I'd have gone after him into a furnace then. We did what we could in getting some of the women safely out, and I may say we fought for our lives in doing it; and I am afraid the young gentleman was hurt once, for he was driven up against some iron rails, and I heard him groan, in spite of all the uproar. However, there was no time to think about ourselves, and at last the crowd grew less, and we thought we'd go inside and see if help was wanted there. Sure enough, while people were fancying themselves half murdered outside, poor creatures in pain couldn't get attended to, and a doctor who had come from the hospital was nearly beside himself, singing out for helpers that wouldn't or couldn't come. A fine young woman, one of the actresses, was so badly hurt, he said she must be carried to the hospital directly; and we managed it among us. Something was said about letting her friends know—she was conscious enough to think of them, and gave her mother's address, and I was sent off to tell her—as bitter-tongued an Irish scold as ever I saw—small thanks did I get for going from Madame Salvati, as she called herself."

"Oh!" cried Grace. "Was it poor Caterina who was hurt?"

"Aye, that was the name the mother said; and that it was the second daughter that had been carried to that hospital—just as if the hospital wanted them for dissection. I didn't stay long parleying there, but when I got back I found I had better not have gone. The doctor had given orders not to let me in; and Mr. Martin, I was told, was gone."

"Where could he go at that time of night?"

"I could not tell. This morning I went off after Mr. Plummer, and from him came to you, Mr. Martin; and it is my advice that you lose no time, for if that young gentleman is bent on giving us the slip, he'll be out of reach while we are thinking about it."

"God forbid!" said the old man. "He is over all; and I will not believe the boy has been shown to us like this to be lost again. Here are your instructions; go to Mr. Herbert's office, and see him yourself. I'll stand all your expenses, and whatever is due into the bargain. What is it, Grace, my dear? Don't keep him when time is precious."

"I want to know about the other unhappy man. Where is he, do you know, sir?"

"Darch Williams? He is at Sir Jesse Strahan's, and has made a declaration to prove that young Martin has been his chum in thieving all along, and only quarrelled with him about their shares."

She lifted her hands for a moment with a heavy sigh; then hastily resumed her bonnet and cloak. "I must go and enquire about poor Caterina, Mr. Martin; I will come again to you by-and-by."

"Whisht, darling, whisht!" said the feeble voice, while the dim eyes rested wistfully on a pale, sorrowful face bent over her, "it's not much pain I'm in, not very much; and it don't matter now the season's just over. They meant to put on a new piece, and I'll not be wanted."

"Oh, sister, sister!" sobbed poor Honor: who being now sufficiently convalescent to move about and help a little, had been permitted to visit her sister's ward, the rather that small hope was given of Caterina's recovery. "Sure it's wanted you'll be every day of my life, now they say I am to live when I'd rather not!"

"That's good hearing, dear, for what would the mother do alone? And there's another who'll be kind to you, darling, kind as a brother for Caterina's sake, I know, when he can—and that's Tonio. I can't make out why he made no money this time, and had to borrow mine; but I know he'll pay it all back, and you'll get into the country, darling, and grow strong."

"Oh, Caterina, don't!" said Honor, hiding her face in her hands, as the loving sentences came out in jerks with the labouring breath.

"What is it, jewel? Tell me."

"If I do, you'll hate me—you'll never forgive me; and yet I couldn't help it, for I thought I was dying."

Her nurse, who came up to moisten Caterina's parched lips, reminded Honor that if she could not be quiet, the doctor would not allow her to remain. The girl looked up, half angrily; but recollected herself directly afterwards.

"I'll do anything you like, only don't send me away from her! I'll be quiet, and keep my shame to myself."

But the wistful eyes were still unsatisfied. "Is it afraid of me

you are, darling?" pleaded the faltering voice; "do you think we'd quarrel just when we're saying good-bye?"

"Can you love your poor Honor if she has been an *informer*?"

There was silence; the elder was past being excited; but she lay pondering the question before she answered, with a faint smile, "I'd like to know first what you found to inform about, darling. Tell me."

Honor knelt, and laid her face close to her ear. "It was one night that Tonio came while you were out, and he and Jones got talking. I had heard them before, and I misdoubted them, and so I listened: and it was about a plan for robbing Mr. Bruce, as they had tried twice before. Some great gentleman had recommended Tonio as courier, on purpose that he might have another chance, and promised him a great reward if he brought back the jewels Mr. Bruce wore round his neck. And I heard him say that if he got him down again he'd not let him slip as he did before."

"Honor, darling, are you sure? You do fancy things sometimes."

"If it was my last words I had to speak, it's all true—and there was more that I can't remember. I longed to tell you when you came home, but I was afraid you wouldn't believe me, and that they'd find it out, and I'd be half murdered. But when I thought I was dying, it seemed as if I couldn't keep it in, and I told the doctor, that he might give the gentleman warning; and I suppose he did; and perhaps that's why Tonio didn't make any money. Oh, nurse, nurse, she's looking so bad! Have I killed her?"

"No, my dear; but you soon will if you are not more careful. Go into the next room. There is a visitor waiting to see you."

Honor, half blind with weeping, did not see who her visitor was, till she was in the pitying arms of Grace Pyne. Clinging round her neck, and sure of her sympathy, she poured out her tale of grief and terror, and received such comfort as could be derived from the assurance that she had done quite right. After awhile, the nurse came to invite them to the patient's bedside. On Grace's stooping to kiss her cheek, Caterina's large eyes brightened a little—very little, for she was sinking fast.

"There's no paint there now," she said, with a smile, that went to Grace's heart, remembering how she had disliked her profession. The broken requests came dropping out one by one. "Give my love to Lucy—be kind to mother—ask the gentlemen to forgive Tonio—try and give Honor a little country air."

They were her last clearly expressed wishes. Save to follow the ministrations of her own Church, she never spoke again.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CASTLE DANGEROUS.

WHEN Edith Bruce heard the carriage drive off that conveyed her husband from her, it is no disparagement to her good sense to confess that she felt lonely and dismayed ; with an indescribable longing to rush after him, and share his unknown danger, which might be greater than hers. That she should have thought of danger at all, independently of railway contingencies, might be accounted for by the adventures they had already gone through ; but she had been superior to all such weakness while Gabriel was there : giving him commissions, and messages to Alice Kerr (now on a visit to Mrs. Salisbury, in London), as if his going up to town had been an ordinary matter of business for the general convenience. "Mind," were her last words, "nothing will be too great a sacrifice for the sake of the Ironhand, even if we have to re-open your store. I think Lucy and I could do that as well as you and Joel."

And her smile cheered the men's hearts as a brave woman's always does, enabling them to turn where duty led them : but not the less did her own heart sink within her when they were really gone. They could not reach London in time for any post ; their train was slow and unpunctual. It was no use counting the hours ; home duties must be attended to—the first being Clare, before whom a dauntless aspect had to be maintained at all hazards. Into this precaution her attendants entered with ready zeal. Lucy, especially, clothed herself in armour of cheerfulness, which did not quite fit, and therefore clattered the more. Mrs. Carroll could not but overhear Lucy's vehement self-gratulation on the capital opportunity for needlework afforded by the absence of the master and Joel. Men were all very well in the house sometimes, but dear me, they took up a lot of your time in running after them, and never reckoned up that the more you ran the less you could sew ; and stockings and buttons were expected to take care of themselves. Then Mrs. Bruce summoned her sister to a consultation about flower beds, declaring that Joel could make Gabriel agree to anything, and only cared for the kitchen garden ; but that now she had a chance of having her own way, and should make the most of her opportunity. So she kept Bob Medland busy all the afternoon, and got several things done which had been postponed for private reasons of Joel's ; and by the time Philip Forrest, who had been visiting one or two of the cottages, joined them at the meal he had especially bespoken, "high tea," in all the luxury of Devonshire produce, there was so much to say about what they had all been doing, that care could *not* get a word in edgeways.

It bided its time ; and, as evening drew on—faster, it seemed, than usual—Edith could not hide from herself her nervous dread of the night. Clare, tired, as she said, with laughing, had thrown herself

down on the sofa ; and Mrs. Bruce, after feeding Settler, was lingering at the hall door, trying to get the better of the image that would present itself—that of Dr. Nelson's innocent young wife, who had been frightened to death in that house, and whose fate she never recalled without a shudder—when Philip came to look after her. He saw at once what she was feeling, and that she was ashamed of it ; especially as she tried to look quite unconcerned, and made some remark on the heavy dew.

" I think," he said, quietly, " there is rather more dew to-night than the garden requires, but I hope it is a sign of fair weather."

She looked quickly round, and, as he had surmised, her eyes were full of tears, though they did not fall.

" By the way," he went on, " about the brigand, if he comes—do you mean to shoot him, or must I ? "

" I deserve to be laughed at," she owned, as she dashed her tears away.

" Laughed at ? What will you think of me when I tell you that I jumped as if I had been shot just now, fancying I heard some one behind me on the stairs. My only regret is that Thirza is not here. I would give anything to see her face under such circumstances as ours at this minute."

" She would be quite sure it was all my fault," said Edith, smiling.

" Yes ; it was all your fault that Bruce became one of the richest men I know."

" Your acquaintance are not very wealthy, then," said she, with a doubtful shake of her head.

" That is more than you can tell ; but I can tell you this—that struggle for fortune was the making of Gabriel, and if we loved him before, we have respected him doubly since. Seeing as we do the friends he brought back with him, and the effect of his influence on them both, I think we may trace a higher hand in the matter than any of ours, and that a special work was reserved for him there, whose result is only just begun. And knowing what he has won, I maintain my first proposition that he is a rich man—and would be, if he lost all his money to-morrow."

She thanked him with a glowing smile, and returned to the drawing-room, so cheered in spirits, as to be ready to make a good story of Philip's alarm, though ignoring her own. He had gone to fetch a volume of Shakespeare, but returned with his hat in his hand, to announce that he had been sent for to visit old Bess Cheveril. She was said to be dying, and asked for the minister ; so he was going at once. Startled, but not liking to own it, Mrs. Bruce asked who had brought the message, and why it had not been taken to the rectory ? It was old Medland : and he said that she wished to see the new gentleman, who had promised to come when asked for. The old man would show him the nearest way, and as Dr. Nelson had been sent for, he would give him a lift home. It was so plain

that he was going as a matter of course, that Edith could only follow him to the door, to see that he took precautions against the night air, and then returned to her sister. She found her putting up her work.

"My dear," said Tiny, "I do not know what you feel, or what you may think it your duty to do, but *I* am going to bed. The only safe place in a thunderstorm is under the bed-clothes, and this is a great deal worse. I could no more sit here to wait for ghosts and robbers than I could fly. Ring for nurse; she always did take care of me when I was frightened, and she will now. If I can hold the corner of her apron it will be something."

"Well!" thought Mrs. Bruce, when thus deserted, "I wonder how Lucy feels, alone in her kitchen."

She had not long to wonder, for hearing some one in the hall, she found Lucy in front of the clock.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am; I thought it might be going to strike."

"It never strikes, Lucy."

"Yes, ma'am, indeed it does—when there's some one in it."

"There can be nobody now; Mr. Bruce took care of that. You shall judge for yourself."

She was going to unlock the door, but with a shriek of terror the valiant Lucy ran away. Edith laughed, called young Medland, and announced her intention of going round the premises with him and Settler. The fears of the others had so ludicrous an effect, that she now felt none at all. Medland, however, seemed not so fortunate. He tried in vain to dissuade her from the attempt; and when that failed, begged her to leave Settler indoors. Mr. Martin was very particular about not letting him do anything without orders, and if any idle fellows should be lurking about, as they did sometimes, to pick up the sticks, or poach the trout, they might throw him a bit of poisoned meat; he had known such things done. Very well, Edith said, she would not take the dog, but she was going herself, and he must attend her.

"Shall I bring you the gun, ma'am?"

"The gun? No, thank you; we shall both be safer without it," she said, colouring with a mixture of amusement and vexation, for it was evident that Medland firmly believed in her having shot any number of brigands. He followed her without further opposition, and she went the rounds as methodically as Gabriel could have done, only pausing now and then to admire the beauty of the night, which was now so warm that it was a pleasure to be in the open air. The moon had not yet risen, but the stars shone brightly, and, in her simple, womanly faith, she felt as if fear would have been disgraceful in a scene so exquisitely still. Once she was sure she heard a rustling movement, but Medland said it was only a rabbit; and at last she returned to the house just as Lucy was coming to say Mrs. Carroll wanted to see her.

As soon as she was safe indoors Medland slipped out again; and, keeping carefully in the shadow, ran to the covered well. The wood-pile beside it was shelter enough to conceal anyone from casual observation, and, on approaching it, he slackened his pace.

"Are you there, Tonio?" he whispered.

The wood was quietly put aside, and a face peered out, followed by the whole figure.

"You have kept me waiting a long time," was his first greeting.

"Is all safe?"

"There is no one about but me. The lady is gone in."

"Well for her! If she had come in my way I would have given her a fright for once. Aye, I would. I have done it before, and I would do it again."

"Was it you that killed the doctor's wife?" said Medland, his teeth chattering as he spoke.

"Killed her? No, I never touched her. But I gave her a fright, and I'll give you one if you don't do as I tell you. We must get this well open. Come, I mean you to take your share in the work, and so I tell you."

"The parson will be back. You'll be caught in the act."

"He'll not be here for an hour. Don't you think we took care of that? Your father knows what to do."

Cowed, as it seemed, by his imperious associate, Bob did as he was told. The well being opened, Tonio went to work to clear the planks laid across the ledge, and then compelled Medland to assist in removing them. By this time the moon had risen sufficiently to throw light on the spot, and Tonio, leaning over and probing the depth with a long stake, satisfied himself that there was a second layer of planks on a lower ledge. This tallied with the old woman's words confided to him by Mrs. Medland. His ready fingers had quickly lashed a cord round the stem of a young tree close by, and secured the other end round his own waist; then having let down his basket of tools, and swung a dark lantern round his neck, he cautiously descended, and commenced his search for Jack Cheveril's deposit. How long he was thus employed he was too absorbed to calculate; but he was suddenly startled by the darkening of the moonlight, and in the very act of laying his hand on an oilskin packet stowed away among the brickwork, he discovered that the cover was being replaced on the well. A volley of threats and curses was his first impulse, his second a gush of promises; but Bob heeded neither. With the energy of desperation he drove the heavy covering firmly on, and then piled the wood on the top till he was completely out of breath. "There," he said; "now he'll keep till morning, and then he'll be glad to make good terms."

He hurried back to the house, and meeting Lucy, she asked him, rather severely, what he had been about to make himself such a figure?—upon which he told her he had found the well uncovered,

and had been making it all safe, "and when Mr. Treherne comes back perhaps you'll just tell him that I did it."

"That was what made Settler so angry. I couldn't keep him quiet, and he frightened Mrs. Carroll. I'll run up and tell them it was only you."

Rather sooner than had been predicted, Philip Forrest returned, as much put out as it was in his nature to be, having been delayed by old Medland's short cut, which proved to be a long round, and then finding the patient asleep, and not at all like a person near her end. They had tried to persuade him to await her wakening, but, his suspicions being aroused, he had started homewards alone. Nothing appeared to have occurred in his absence; and, the fastenings having been all looked to, the household went quietly to bed.

How much Bob slept is not known, but with the peep of day he was at the well; and had scarcely reached it before Mr. Forrest was at his side, sternly asking what he was going to do. Bob fell on his knees, and confessed then and there that he had once stolen some spoons, and a rogue who knew it had threatened to expose him if he didn't help him in a job; that he had come to do the job last night, and he had caught him in a trap, and was just going to look at him—that was all. And so evident was the truth of what he said, that Philip was seriously alarmed. A man left in such a position might be in the greatest danger. The well must be opened that moment. By their united efforts it was done: but no one was there. The broken cord was hanging down, and the planks were broken through. Medland's exultation changed into terror; he thought his enemy had escaped. But Philip's dread was of a different kind. He was hurrying down towards the river to obtain assistance from a neighbouring cottage, when he heard Settler barking furiously; and, following the sound, he traced the dog into a thicket, whose boughs and tangled shrubs almost touched the water, and which it was not easy to penetrate. When penetrated, it revealed a broken arch of masonry, evidently once a drain, and it furnished the missing clue to the mystery of both house and well. It communicated with both, and Tonio had evidently attempted to escape by it: but his rope had failed, or his footing slipped, and he lay near the entrance unable to crawl a yard further, in so piteous a plight that even Bob could afford to pity him. The labourers who had been summoned to help, carried him to the cottage, and Dr. Nelson was sent for. He found the leg broken, the back severely sprained; besides bruises innumerable. To move him again would have been too great a risk, so the cottage was made a hospital for the time, and all needful comforts were sent down to it by the ladies. Medland grumbled at all this anxiety and tenderness being shown to such an object: but even he was silenced when Philip reminded him how nearly he had been liable to be called to account for the man's death.

"You did good service, and will be rewarded, never fear; and

after this I trust we shall hear no more of these alarms," said Philip, in whose breast pocket at that moment was safely deposited the packet which had cost so dear, and been so strangely recovered.

It was opened that evening, in the presence of the canon and the doctor, and it became at once apparent that some one must take it up to London immediately; "either you or I, Frank," said Philip, "whichever can be spared." The doctor shook his head, and beckoned him apart. "I must not leave that man," he said, "his case is too critical. Don't tell these kind-hearted women, but I have just found out how *that* happened: the terror that destroyed my wife. Medland gave me a hint, and the fellow owns it."

Mr. Forrest wrung his friend's hand, and turned away to hide his own emotion. The story, however, got wind in spite of the doctor's reticence, and all knew, far and near, that he was sitting up at night, and visiting by day, the man who had killed his wife. Such a fact was enough for simple folks, and Dr. Nelson was adored by his patients from that hour.

Before Philip Forrest started, a letter arrived from Gabriel, to whom we must now return.

A note from Hartley Carroll had met Gabriel at the London terminus, to request that, late as it was, he would meet him at Sir Jesse Strahan's. On arriving there with Joel, they were both struck by the hushed, awestricken appearance of the servants and the stillness of the house, but were little prepared for the intelligence awaiting them. Sir Jesse had been found in his chair about eight in the morning, so near his end, that all the efforts of three physicians failed to revive the sinking animation. For some hours they persisted, Mrs. Salisbury, who had been summoned in haste, lending all the assistance her experience could afford; but he died towards noon—a fact of which Hartley was not aware till some hours later. His time had been spent, under Mr. Herbert's advice, in first releasing Mr. Plummer, and then examining his evidence; and it was on his arrival in the evening, prepared, at all risks, to confront his former ally with proofs for which he believed him unprepared, that he learned the awful doom which had cut Sir Jesse's schemes short—a doom so closely connected with the history of the diamonds, that the published reports of the inquest derived a double interest from the light it threw on the Craggs Court affair.

Sir Jesse Strahan's death had one material effect: those whom fear or cupidity would have kept silent, or tempted to untruth, found their own interest in coming forward to give evidence. Bilson's brother, as soon as he learned the state of the case, took the matter into his own hands, and convinced her that as her annuity was lost, her only chance was to appear as a witness, and prove she had acted under orders. And Darch Williams would have been arrested by her means, only Slade, who, as well as the so-called superintendent, had been the paid spy of the dead man

got the start of her, and had him and the diamonds in his safe keeping already. The news of his old employer's death was a shock which seemed to paralyse Darch at first; but his courage revived, and he expressed his satisfaction that the truth should be known at last. He had been misrepresented all his life, and now everybody would do him justice.

Our space is far too limited to give more than a very brief summary of the facts on which he so confidently relied; and to save time, we must begin with others, which had no immediate connection with them. That all could be made clear to the parties concerned at this juncture, or indeed at any other, we are not prepared to show; but the reader's convenience will be best considered by throwing the history into one condensed form.

Sir Jesse Strahan, wealthy as he was when he died, had twice been on the brink of ruin. The first time, it was in connection with an enterprise into which he had led Desmond Moreton: who, absorbed in his mechanical studies, trusted to his sagacity about his investments. Without hinting at the risk they both ran of losing all they had invested, he made him believe that Miss Wyatt's fortune could be doubled by its being embarked in the same speculation; and Desmond, without enquiry, took his advice, discovering, when too late, that his counsellor had contrived to extricate himself at his ward's expense, and that he had himself violated his sacred trust, in not defending her from such spoliation. It preyed on his mind, already overwrought; and having secured a provision for his faithful clerk, he refunded the fortune as far as his means would allow, only reserving sufficient to convey himself and his boy to the exile whence he never returned. His intention had evidently been to destroy all his papers; but he overlooked an important number, which old Martin collected and treasured up, always hoping for his return. After the announcement of his death, the old clerk examined and studied these papers, and their perusal confirmed his own previous conviction of the real state of the case. He had always distrusted Sir Jesse, and grieved over his influence with Desmond—now he looked upon him as the author of his ruin. And with what justice may be understood by the fact that the belief in his holding such an opinion made Sir Jesse endeavour to gain a hold upon him through Mr. Plummer, whose own path had been sufficiently crooked to lead him into the worst of snares—the power of an unscrupulous patron.

The second crisis in Sir Jesse's career was about the period of his wife's last illness. In obtaining possession of the famous diamonds, his first object, no doubt, was to blind the judgment of the world with a display of affluence; but the pressure of necessity soon made room for the temptation to turn them to account. Old Oram was taken into his councils, and recommended him the only workman on whom he could depend—Darch Williams: who was engaged, for what seemed to him a large reward, to imitate the finest of the

diamonds, and place the false in the setting of the true. Some of the smaller brilliants were left untouched, and the whole was so skilfully done, that only an experienced eye would have suspected the truth. Darch Williams was got rid of, and the relief obtained arriving just in time, Sir Jesse's fortunes recovered themselves, and never failed him again. But before he was able to redeem the diamonds, they were lost in the Craggs Court affair, whose mystery was known to him, and his only hope was that no discovery would be made before the ornaments should be again in his power—at Mrs. Salisbury's death. When Darch returned to England with the news that Mr. Bruce had found the lost gems in Australia, and carried them about his person, the dread of exposure made Sir Jesse at once buy Darch's co-operation, and the whole arrangement about his daughter's portrait was, as the reader has already surmised, a part of the scheme for concealing his first fraud. He excused the proceeding to his conscience as reparation, not robbery; and had it been crowned with success, he had planned the expatriation of Darch Williams in such a fashion as would, he hoped, have secured himself from any further hazard. Of the evidence lying concealed in the well at Lowlevels, he of course knew nothing; nor could he surmise that the attempts made there by thieves at different times, was owing to the rumour among them that some of the Craggs Court booty had been hidden there. Jack Cheveril's remorse had nearly led him to Mrs. Salisbury's feet, to confess his crime and restore his share—but his courage failing him, he left it, as we have seen, together with the papers relating to the transaction, which he had taken from the old man's secret drawer with the jewels.

The story of poor Zack was only partially known, but it was conjectured that the fear of his evidence made Hughes and Cheveril kidnap him, and it was certain that he was with them in Australia. It appeared that they all suffered from fever in the bush, and Hughes was the first to succumb, without having reaped the smallest advantage from his crime. His share was much the largest, but he had not dared to dispose of any of it, and Cheveril only survived him a week, leaving a few words written on the fly-leaf of a torn book, stating that the rest of the diamonds were hidden at Lowlevels, in Devonshire, and begging whoever found this paper to restore them—he did not explain to whom. The poor idiot, after their death, in wandering for food, fell into the hands of the hard masters from whom Gabriel rescued him; though unable to avert the fate that befell him at last. Surprised by his old persecutor Darch, when no help was near, his resistance provoked him to violence, and Bruce and his friends found him bleeding from a wound on the head, but more coherent than he had ever been before. His memory and understanding flashed for a moment in the socket, and he guided them at last to the spot he had sought so often in vain—the hut where the treasure was left by the dead body of Jack Cheveril. There he died,

and was buried with his former associate; and the three friends, after dividing the gems, made a covenant not to part from them, or each other, till they had restored them to their owner.

Such being the facts, it is scarcely necessary to explain that the first deposition of Darch Williams was the result of an interview with his patron; he himself frankly acknowledged it at the inquest, and that but for his death, he should have persisted in the charge, believing that Martin had made Grace Pyne betray him. He had heard Grace Pyne's evidence, and it was true, every word, as far as he knew. The blow was given him by his mate, Tonio Peretti, in a quarrel they had after his failure in the plot to rob Mr. Bruce abroad.

So many points came out in this first examination, that the inquest was necessarily adjourned, and orders were given for the attendance of Erasmus Martin, the Ironhand, whose connection with the deceased was just beginning to be understood. We cannot attempt to describe with what sensations Mrs. Salisbury learned the truth; it was well for her at her age that one shock had a neutralising effect on the other, and that the horror and agitation of Sir Jesse's death were alleviated by the thrill of thankfulness that woke up the dormant yearnings of her motherly love. All the past was forgiven—the estrangement, the bitterness, the disappointments, which had been one of her heaviest trials; she had felt drawn to that young man the first day she saw him, and now she understood why. And she wept in Alice's arms as she told her the wonderful news; and Alice, terrified at her own sensations, as if some tremendous change were coming over her whole life, returned her caresses with a flood of sympathy.

But the next day, and the next, passed, and the solemn enquiry was still prolonged, and yet Martin had not been found. He might never have been found again, but for a small instrument, overlooked by friend and foe.

An emigrant ship was waiting at Gravesend for the tide, and 'Liza had gone down to take leave of her George, who, as a help towards growing steady, had engaged as one of the crew. The little mission vessel had conveyed several kindly visitants on board, with books, and gifts, and parting words of holy counsel; and David Forrest, among other clergy, had gone to take a last look at some of his people. There he caught sight of a face whose wide mouth and mischievous eyes could never be mistaken. With one bound he had his strong hand on Bill Close's collar, and dragged him to light on the deck.

"Bill, I insist upon it, tell me why you are here."

Bill would have kicked anybody else, but Mr. Forrest was inviolable, so he only grinned in silence. George, however, promptly supplied the answer. "He's going to the diggings, sir, with the Ironhand."

"My good, dear lad, is the Ironhand on board? Thank God! Take me to him—all right, Bill," as the boy began something about not betraying him. "He shall go if he likes, and you too, but I must see him first."

Bill would still have made a difficulty, but was silenced by George. And in a few minutes David stood in the close, crowded cabin, where stretched in his berth, sad, ill, and suffering, lay Martin the Ironhand.

The bruise in his side, received at the theatre, had in fact proved serious; and the sleeplessness and pain he had suffered had been aggravated by distress of mind. His purpose had been to depart unobserved, and write to Gabriel when out of reach; but Bill Close had found him out, and, charmed with the prospect of bush life in his company, had stuck to him in spite of remonstrance.

"I knew it was bad for the poor chap," faltered the hunter, in apology, "but I was too ill to see about sending him back. You'll take him home with you, and keep my secret. I can't face them all, to hear what must be said—and Bruce will not believe that fellow's story—or if he does——"

"If he does, you shall sail by the next ship, and I'll go with you, but at present you are wanted at home; and out of this ship I don't stir without you. Here is George to back me when I say it. My dear fellow, would I stop you if God's finger pointed to you to go? How, then, can I let you go when He is holding you back? Trust me so far—others have done so, and never regretted it—I tell you in His name, that it rests with you, under His blessing, to take up your father's work, redeem his honour, and cherish his mother's old age. If it be painful, never mind—you can bear pain as well as any man—but this I promise you, you will not have to bear disgrace. The truth has been wonderfully preserved for you, and as wonderfully has come to light."

We could fill another volume with our history, but must leave the reader to imagine it for himself. An invalid almost for the first time in his life, the admission of Erasmus to his place in the family, and his station in the world, was made he hardly knew how; all that he was really conscious of was the new world of motherly tenderness that was like a foretaste of heaven. His whole nature seemed to soften under its influence; and instead of the resentful, defiant spirit in which he might have encountered society's wondering curiosity, all thought of self was lost in the yearning to repay love with love, and make some atonement for the past. The first real confidence between him and his grandmother, when they could speak of business at all, came from her intense sympathy in the matter of Bruce's lost inheritance. No matter whose the fault—that must be made good, if Highlevels were let for the remainder of her days.

It proved, however, to be unnecessary. Sir Jesse's will, made after a former illness, revealed his secret reliance on her as his

daughter's best protector, for he left her sole guardian and trustee, and bequeathed her the sum of ten thousand pounds. That this would be laid out on the estate, which would pass ultimately to Myra, was of course his belief; but both Mrs. Salisbury and her grandson looked upon it as a tardy restitution: and in due course of time, the old wrong was, as far as might be, redeemed.

Darch Williams and Bilson disappeared immediately after the inquest. Clever as he was, he could not escape the net he had twined for himself. No proceedings were taken against them, and the affair of the diamonds was put into the hands of the lawyers. Grace received a letter of farewell from Paris, where Mr. Jones (or Williams) and his wife had settled for the present; he having, by his own account, the promise of work at high wages. The letter cost Grace some tears, but the sting of that grief had lost its power. Her own happiness might be gone, but she could live for that of others; so many claimed her that she would never be without employment; and, indeed, she became the treasure of Mrs. Bruce's household, when Joel, his term of willing service ending with the willing delivery of his jewel-case, bought a little farm with his Australian gold, and carried away Lucy to be its head. There poor Honor always found a welcome, and, in time, a home; whether Bob Medland will ever do as he vows he will, and earn enough to make her his wife, remains to be seen. He was well rewarded for his behaviour, and has always exulted in the acuteness of his own judgment—that Mr. Martin held the good cards. We may just remark that Tonio, who was for months under Dr. Nelson's care, and allowed to escape punishment, save the lameness he had brought on himself, repaid his benefactor by regularly sending him begging letters.

It may be remembered that Sir Jesse Strahan gave Hartley Carroll a hint, through which he hoped to regain some of his old influence. It proved to be valuable enough to justify the reputation of the great speculator, and offered Hartley a chance of retrieving his fortunes; one which might never occur again. But it required fresh capital, and he knew not where to find it. Quite unexpectedly, Mr. Herbert announced that a client had the money to invest; and the enterprise, freed from the baneful influence of Sir Jesse, was the re-opening of a channel of prosperity: which in time relieved Carroll of all fear that he should be the ruin of Gabriel. The lesson Hartley had learned was not thrown away, and he and his wife were happier ever after for the passing trial. It was long before he knew that the relief had come from the Ironhand's Australian gold.

Helen Ford did not return to England for some time after the news of Sir Jesse's death. She persuaded her brother to spend a year or two in Italy, and invited Alice Kerr to join them, and study art at the fountain-head. But Alice could not be spared. All the love of which she was capable, Myra Strahan seemed to have given to her artist friend; and her mind became more healthy, her moral faculties

less obtuse, in the intercourse with the fresh young nature, itself in a happy spring-tide of growth and culture, with summer near at hand.

Alice's home was at Lowlevels, where Gabriel and Edith, after their period of anxiety, were tasting some of the purest happiness that earth can bestow ; but whenever Erasmus went to London, she was sent for by Mrs. Salisbury to the great house : and during the whole of that winter and spring, the claims of business took him away very often. He had furnished a set of rooms for his old godfather, under the special guardianship of Burns, and lodged with him when obliged to be in town. One day, returning to Highlevels unexpectedly, he was received by Myra with reproaches, that now he was come, Alice would go away—and she had promised to teach her how to earn money. She did not mind giving some of it away afterwards, if only she might earn it first, and no one but Alice could show her how. Her cousin, whose pet she had long become, whispered a word or two in her ear, which sent her away in breathless haste; and Mrs. Salisbury was astounded by the question, whether Alice might stay with them altogether? Impossible; who had put it into her head? Erasmus. Oh! that altered the case, and the sooner they knew what he meant the better. So in search of Erasmus they went, and were met by him at the library door. "She will stay if you consent," he began; and the next moment Alice was in the old lady's arms, pressed lovingly to her bosom.

On that tender resting-place we leave her, confident that her lesson on chivalry was prophetic; that the spurs of the knight will be won by the squire—the brand of shame and sorrow taken away by the touch of the Cross.

THE END.

IN MEMORIAM.

"On the 28th Oct., at Nice, in the 54th year of her age, JULIA, only child of the late MORGAN PETER KAVANAGH, Esq., of the County of Kildare, and of his wife, BRIDGET FITZPATRICK. Her loss is much deplored by her affectionate mother, as well as by the numerous friends who valued her writings."

SUCH was the sad and most unexpected announcement in the *Times* of Nov. 6th. It was impossible for anyone who had enjoyed the friendship of Julia Kavanagh to read it without a feeling of emotion and deep regret. Suddenly, at eight o'clock on that calm Sunday morning, the spirit of Julia Kavanagh passed away to its rest.

For a considerable time Miss Kavanagh had been a daily martyr to neuralgia, and she and I had frequently compared notes and sympathized with each other upon our experiences of this painful affection. But only a few days before the end I had received a letter from her in which she gave me an improved account of her health, and a hope that ere long she should be completely restored. It was not to be.

My acquaintance with Miss Kavanagh commenced some years ago. At that time I was living in Paris. A great portion of Miss Kavanagh's life had been spent in France. Her knowledge of the French language was equal to that of her own, and she spoke it with equal purity. She composed in French with the same facility as in English. Had she not possessed so much original talent she would have made an admirable translator in both languages. Very frequently after attending service on a Sunday morning at the Ambassador's chapel, I would go on to the Rue Ponthieu, and spend a few hours in delightful conversation with Mrs. and Miss Kavanagh. These afternoons remain one of my pleasantest reminiscences of those days. Julia Kavanagh was as intellectual in her conversations as in her writings, combined with an almost childlike simplicity of manner and rectitude of thought. Then, and at all times, it was touching to witness the love and devotion of mother and daughter for each other, and it is impossible to think of the aged mother, in her almost blindness, without the most heartfelt sorrow and sympathy.

In person, Julia Kavanagh was extremely small. I had frequently asked her for her photograph; but her last allusion to that subject was as follows: "I really cannot send to you the dark and evil-looking thing they tell me is myself. But some years ago a friend sketched me in water colours, and I have asked him to send it to you." It came in due time, and hangs before me as I write. A youngish woman, at a desk on an ordinary table; her arms are crossed in contemplation: thinking out, perhaps, a plot or problem. Beside her is a book-case, and before her a bowl of old china, which

contained some object of feminine work. In person, I have said, she was extremely small. But it was impossible to look at those large, luminous brown eyes, full of goodness and softness: impossible to note the magnificently shaped head surmounted by coil after coil of most beautiful hair, without feeling yourself in the presence of more than ordinary intellectual capacity. And although it is not intended in this short notice to enter upon the subject of Miss Kavanagh's literary merits, it may be mentioned that scarcely in her novels does she show the greatest capacities of her mind.

Although but middle-aged, Miss Kavanagh is somehow associated in our thoughts with a literary period that has gone by: the period that knew Charlotte Brontë and Thackeray: days of which we now read with so much melancholy pleasure. There is a double charm in hearing of days and people that were before our time; and many a conversation had Miss Kavanagh and I about the days in question. I remember well her telling me of her first meeting with Charlotte Brontë. It was at an evening party at Thackeray's, very soon after the author of *Jane Eyre* had been openly recognised.

"Charlotte Brontë," said Julia Kavanagh, "soon after she entered the room, came up; and sitting down beside me on the sofa, fixed her eyes upon me for some time. Then she said, slowly—and they were the first words I heard her speak—'The intellectual faculties largely developed: I have no doubt the moral also.'"

Charlotte Brontë was right. It was impossible to look at the pure depths of those large brown eyes without feeling that goodness held an equal sway with talent. Everything about Julia Kavanagh betokened that she was highly religious, but more than all, her life spoke of it. Her two great affections were her mother and her work. "I was always compelled to write," she one day remarked to me. "From a child I was always making up tales. It came to me as naturally as sleep. And yet I never satisfy myself in my plots. I am shackled also. Mamma insists upon my ending every story happily. In vain I tell her that it is not true to life. It is because of that very fact, she replies; because there is so much unhappiness in real life, that she will insist upon nothing but sunshine in my tales. Writing, after a time, becomes as necessary as one's daily food."

But there came a day when writing had to be put away. At the outbreak of the Franco-German war, Miss Kavanagh and her mother fled to Rouen for refuge, though even there they did not escape some of the terrors of that time. Subsequently they went to Nice. Paris did not suit the mother's health, and the devoted daughter lived only in the mother's happiness and welfare. From that time I never saw her—was never to see her again—but we kept up a frequent and interesting correspondence. The greater portion of last year and of this, Miss Kavanagh was a daily martyr to neuralgia. Night after night would be spent in sleepless agony. All work had to be laid aside. In vain I wrote to her to leave Nice, and give trial

to the climate of England. In the hot summer months the two ladies would migrate into the mountains to breathe purer, fresher air than that of Nice, and this summer, as it seemed, with greater success. From these mountainous retreats Julia Kavanagh would write me interesting and pleasant letters, telling me of her quiet life; and many a time I had said that I would go down and renew my friendship by personal intercourse. But one opportunity after another was neglected and put off, and became lost for ever. I will place her last two notes before the reader, but with diffidence and apology, as one of them contains a personal allusion that under other circumstances one could only refrain from publishing. Face to face with the Great Reality to which we must all pay tribute in turn, the smaller thoughts and motives of the world lose their influence. The reader will bear in mind that it is the expression of a kind and partial friend:—

“SAINT DALMAS, *September, 1877.*

“MY DEAR MR. WOOD,—Of course, I had scarcely written to you that I could not let you have another story, than, woman-like, I changed my mind, and I sat down and indited the following tale, which, to say the truth, has been in my mind *three* years. I think you will like it. Perhaps it will do for the Christmas Number; but pray do not shorten it.

“I write from Piedmont, in an old convent: but there is no post-office within miles; so I shall not dispatch my story till we reach Nice: at the end of the week, I hope, for change of air has not done my neuralgia much good. I suppose it escapes general rules.

“I cannot tell you what a blessing the ARGOSY proved here! An English lady, who goes wild on a Sunday — this is a very pretty, but very dull place — went into transports when I came to the rescue with your precious pages. Mamma and I were especially delighted with *Holland*. It is as good as travelling without the fatigue of it.

“Pray thank Mrs. Wood very kindly for her letter. It cheered and comforted me as a kind remembrance always does when one is low — and I was so just then.

“I have been writing the whole morning, and must abridge this epistle, as I am far from strong.

“NICE, *September 30th, 1877.*

“I finish my letter here, and send it with ‘Clement’s Love.’ I have taken great pains with it, and shall be affronted if you do not like it much.

“I have no English news of the *Fairy Tales*, but they are coming out in the Tauchnitz edition—I mean the edition for children’s books.

“Saint Dalmas was already very cold when we left, and the heat of Nice is very agreeable to such chilly bodies as we are.

“And now, au revoir, my dear Mr. Wood. Many thanks for the ARGOSY, to which I hope to become once more a contributor; as,

though I am still very unwell, I think I am a *little* better. Mamma unites in kind regards, and I am, as ever,

"Yours truly, JULIA KAVANAGH."

When this letter reached its destination I was in Cornwall, amidst the scenery of the North Coast, also of Devon and Somerset: the fine outlines of Boscastle and Tintagel; the more luxuriant beauties of Clovelly and Ilfracombe, Lynton and Lynmouth, with the rugged Valley of Rocks, and the more charming and wonderfully beautiful Valley of *East Lynn*. Consequently Miss Kavanagh's MS. and letter remained unacknowledged, and the following note was the result:—

"NICE, Alpes Maritimes, *October 13th, 1877.*

"MY DEAR MR. WOOD,—I sent you, a fortnight ago, a little story, called 'Clement's Love.' Has it reached you safely? I am getting uneasy about my poor Clement, and fear he has been wrecked in the post-office ocean. I wrote to you at the same time. Will you kindly let me know if Clement is all right?

"I trust you have been tolerably free from our common enemy, neuralgia. I was a martyr to it the whole summer, but am getting much better, thank Heaven.

"Mamma unites in kind regards, and I am, as ever,

"Yours truly, JULIA KAVANAGH."

"Clement's Love," however, reached me safely. It cannot fail to bear great additional interest to the reader from the fact that with it Julia Kavanagh takes her leave for ever of these pages, which her tales have so often adorned. In her short stories she was, I think, even happier than in her longer ones. I know that it gave her more pleasure to write them. Especially good was one which appeared some years ago in the *ARGOSY*—"Sylvie's Vow." But her best story was one called "By the Well," which appeared yet earlier in *Temple Bar*. I once remarked to her: "That was the best story you ever wrote."—"Yes," she replied emphatically; "it was the best story I ever wrote, and it cost me the least effort."

In one of the above letters, Miss Kavanagh hopes once more to become a contributor to the *ARGOSY*. This hope was not to be fulfilled. The hand that penned the words, that penned "Clement's Love," almost before the ink was dry upon the paper, was to lie cold and still. The life's work was done. It is a strange fact and coincidence that this story is the only one of Miss Kavanagh's that has an unhappy ending: perhaps the only one she ever so ended. It is as though a presentiment haunted the writer of what was so soon to be. "She (Angélique) took up her bundle, and with one sad look around her, she walked down the path that led to the sea. . . . She shunned the village, and entered the lane that lies at the back of the houses. The sun had long left it. It was shadowy and

dim, and in the dimness and the shadow the figure of Angélique slowly vanished, and thus passed away for ever from Manneville."

These words might almost be applied to their writer. They are probably the last she ever wrote in the way of story. Julia Kavanagh has passed away for ever from the earth. Like Angélique, she has walked down the path that leads to the sea, the great sea of Eternity. All the deep mysteries of the unseen world are now revealed to her. Her work is over : industrious, unceasing work—and her life. But with her the end of this life is but the beginning of the fuller and more perfect life to which she was ever tending. She has gone where her good works follow her. She has left a name behind her that all know, and those love most who knew her best. Let this be a consolation to that mother who is left to mourn the loss of her only child : the constant companion of her life ; the stay and delight of her old age. With David she may say, "I shall go to her, but she will not return to me." For myself, when thinking of the loss of a much valued friend, and contemplating the grief of the lonely and stricken mother, it is difficult to see the dark cloud of sorrow for the full blaze beyond of unfading happiness and glory.

CHARLES W. WOOD.

CLEMENT'S LOVE.

BY JULIA KAVANAGH.

EVERY little place has its doubtful character, its scapegoat, its *bête noire*, its vehicle for mischief, its embodiment of wickedness ; we do not speak of crime, but of that form of wrong which the law cannot touch, but which the good deplore and the respectable abhor. Manneville would not have thought itself fit to be put down on the map if it had not had such a person every now and then. That person a few years ago happened to be a beautiful girl, tall, fair and strong, with azure eyes and golden hair ; a girl fresh as a rose, and whose name, of all names, was Angélique.

She was an orphan. She had been reared by a weak old uncle, who let her grow up as she pleased, provided she did not trouble him. And as she cost him little or nothing—for she was not merely strong, but also clever, and would work hard and get well paid for her work, and moreover do anything she was pleased to turn her hand to—he let Angélique have her way till he died, and she remained alone in his little dark shingle house, perched on the cliff overlooking the sea on one side, and the valley and the village on the other.

The uncle of Angélique had no inheritance to leave with which the law could meddle. The house in which he had lived nearly all his life was not his : and as Angélique at once offered to pay the rent

beforehand—and did so—her landlord, Maître André Grandsire, was too shrewd a Norman to turn out so safe a tenant.

"You see, boy," he said to his son Germain, "the girl gives no trouble. If we do not keep her, we may get some half-starved weaver instead, who will never pay a sou, and we shall have to let the house fall to pieces, as we did last year with that of the Mathieus—the only way to get rid of such rats."

Germain nodded sulkily, but added that he did not like Angélique. She was too bold. Maître André winked and laughed to himself. He knew that Germain was always sneaking after the girl, but what did he, the rich farmer and landlord, care? Boys would be boys, and Angélique was able to take care of herself. And thus it was that there was no one to meddle with the bright but defiant maiden of sixteen so early cast upon her own resources. She had grown up as fresh—as prickly too—as a wild rose, and she was left unmolested on her thorny stem.

The world did not like Angélique, and many people feared her. She did no actual harm, but she was reckless, and it was felt that her mood would be dangerous. She dreaded nothing and no one, and cared but for one human being—an orphan lad, a little older than herself, named Clement Lereux: a gentle, pious, and silent youth, who had always worshipped her, and towards whom she had always been tender and mild. It was natural that Clement should think kindly of his friend, and natural too that others should not share his feeling; where he saw no harm, others saw nothing else.

As a child, Angélique had been as strong and as wild as any boy, and as a girl she showed that her passions were keen, and that she did not care to lay them under control. So when any deed of mischief was perpetrated in Manneville it became a matter of course to connect her with it. Proof might fail, but Angélique was certainly at the bottom of it. It was part of her wickedness, you see, that there should be no proof against her.

Angélique seldom entered the parish church, though when she did so, she behaved herself modestly. The curé made a few attempts to tame her. She listened to him respectfully, but took no heed of his counsel. "She is a wild thing," the good man said, "a wild thing, but she will know better," a charitable sentiment which few echoed. And yet Angélique was too handsome not to inspire other feelings than those of dislike or fear. Young men like Germain might not have a good word to say for her, but they liked her beauty. The girls who were most jealous of her did their best to imitate her ways and her stately carriage. The matrons who shook their heads over her, also said it was a pity. Old men shrugged their shoulders and smiled when she was mentioned, and children looked at her half in fear, half in admiration, as she passed by, so fair, so tall, so bright, so beautiful a creature, spite of her wickedness and her bad name.

Clement was a weaver, and a hard-working one. When his day's

work was done, he went up to the rocky height on which Angélique's cottage stood, and sat there looking at the wide sea beneath him. If Angélique was at home and in the mood to please him she came and joined him for a few moments. If she did not appear he made no attempt to seek her. She had not forbidden it, but he loved her dearly, with the love of a pure, proud nature, and her fair name was too precious in his eyes to be risked lightly. And for once a lover proved a girl's safeguard. No one could suspect Clement; and since he was there to worship as well as to watch, no one could venture to say a word, so far as love and lovers went, against naughty Angélique.

The day had been dark and sultry, and the evening sun sank red and sullen in a green and heavy-looking sea, when Clement went up as usual to his post, and as usual sat waiting patiently. He knew that Angélique was within, for her window was half open, and through it he had caught a glimpse of her moving to and fro, but he knew too that she was not in the right mood for him, for giving him a careless nod she had closed the window in his face. At the end of half an hour her door opened, and Angélique came out; she ignored Clement, and turning her back to him and to the sea she swiftly went down the path leading to the village and the valley. Clement did not attempt to follow her; he did not even turn round to follow her light retreating figure with his wistful eyes; but he let time pass on, and sat looking at the red horizon that turned paler and paler as he looked, then at a faint star seeming to come forth from the darkness of the sky till it settled in a clear open spot, in calm and steady beauty.

"Now what are you doing here?" asked a young impatient voice, which he knew well, and always loved to hear, whatever its tones might be. Clement looked up and saw Angélique standing by him. She looked displeased and there was a frown on her handsome face.

"I am looking at the sea!" he composedly answered.

"I have come to tell you that this must end," she continued, without heeding his answer, and speaking in a clear, cold voice. "It can never be, Clement."

Although she did not choose to speak more plainly, Clement no doubt understood her meaning, for his reply was a quiet:

"Why so?"

"Why so! you poor simple Clement; because I should be the ruin of you," answered Angélique, speaking in an altered tone, as she sat down on a stone facing him, and looked straight in his face with her saucy blue eyes, which just then had a very tender gleam in them. "I have liked you all my life, Clement, for you have been true to me, ay, true as a brother; I like you better than I shall ever like anyone else in this world, and surely you know it; but I will never marry you. You see you are good and I am wicked ——"

"You are not," he interrupted, with a grave smile.

"I am," she persisted, "though you would never believe it. I am fond of you, indeed; but then you are fonder of me than I am of you, and so I would make you bad like myself, and you could not make me good as you are, and it would break your heart, and so you see I can never be your wife."

"Whose wife then will you be?" asked Clement, composedly.

Angélique impatiently shook her fair handsome head.

"How should I know? Is there not plenty of time to think of it?" she replied. "But not yours, Clement—never yours. Come up here to look at the sea as much as ever you please, but do not come up for *that*!"

She laughed, and her cheek had lost none of its rich bloom as she spoke. But sternness had gathered over Clement's pale face, his dark eyebrows were knit, and the whole meaning of his calm, thoughtful countenance, altered as he spoke.

"You shall be no man's wife save mine whilst I live," he said, rising.

"What?" cried Angélique.

"I say that whilst I live you shall be no man's wife save mine," he deliberately repeated. And without giving her a look, he went down the path, leaving Angélique sitting there amazed, angry, and confounded, at this sudden rebellion of her life-long slave.

"How dare he!" she cried, starting up to her feet, and clenching her hands in impotent wrath. "I might not have done it just yet, for his sake, but now I will—I will, and he shall see it—no man's wife save his!—he shall see it, and let him come up here in the evening—not a word—not a look—not a sign shall he ever again get from me—not one—not one."

But Clement, who belonged to the cool and imperturbable order of Norman peasants, was not so easily scared away as Angélique thought he would be. He had looked upon her as his ever since he was a boy, and he stubbornly held her his still now that he was a man. He considered his right over her clear, and not to be disputed even by Angélique herself, and so he came up to the cliff the very next evening, and though she refused to appear, he came on the evening that followed. Day after day, week after week, even when the rainy season set in, he came. In vain she kept aloof or gave him neither word nor sign. When she happened to pass him by, Clement came and sat on the broad flat stone, and sedately smoked his pipe whilst he looked at the sea.

They exchanged speech at last, but not on the cliff. On a clear, wintry night, with the cold moon shining down upon the main street of Manneville, and all the gable-ends of the little houses lit up in silvery lines on the background of sky, Clement saw her coming towards him, with a short, heavily-built young man walking by her side. They parted, however, before they reached the spot where he stood waiting, and when Angélique came and passed by him, she was

alone. That she saw and knew him he felt sure, but she went on and gave no token of recognition. Clement followed and soon overtook her. "Angélique," he said, emphatically, "that was Germain."

"Yes," composedly answered the girl, "his name is Germain."

"When he saw me, he walked away and left you," resumed Clement.

Angélique turned upon him with a half-scornful, half-good-humoured look.

"Was it because Germain saw you that he left me?" she asked.

"Clement, I like you—but you have odd fancies."

"You mean that because I have never been a brawler and a fighter, men need not fear me!" he said; "but I am a man, Angélique, and Germain is a coward."

Angélique quickened her step as if she scorned to reply, but Clement quickened his too. They were in a lonely part of the street now; there were no houses near them, only little gardens stretching on either side.

"No one can hear us here," said Clement. "Angélique, Germain tells you that he will marry you next spring when his mourning for his father is out; it is not true. His banns will be published to-morrow week in the church of Manneville."

She stood and stared at him.

"His banns! And with whom?" asked she.

"With his cousin, Geneviève of Fontaine."

"Bah! it is not true," she said at last. "You would not deceive me, Clement, but you are deceived. He dare not do that to *me*," she added in a low tone—low, but full of wrath.

"A coward will do anything to a woman who has no man to protect her," answered Clement, quietly.

"But he knows me," said Angélique. "He knows I would set fire to all he has if he played me false."

"He is insured," said Clement, coolly.

"But how can you know it?" she asked, turning on him suddenly.

"I told you that you should never be any other man's wife than mine whilst I lived, and when I saw that he was after you, and that you let him be, I watched him. He went to Fontaine, so did I. He went to see his cousin Geneviève, I went to see her uncle Simon, my father's old friend, and so I knew of the courtship, though it was kept quiet, and when I also knew about the banns, I thought it time to tell you."

Angélique walked on in silence, and Clement followed her and did not speak. She went up the stony path that led to her cottage, and though she never looked back, Clement followed in her steps as if he had been her very shadow. Instead of entering her house, Angélique sat down in the moonlight and buried her face in her hands, and Clement sat on the stone facing her, and looked at the broad white sea, and waited.

At length Angélique raised her face, on which large bright tears were shining.

"They are not for me, nor for his treachery and his baseness," she said, in a broken voice. "I do not cry so easily. They are for you, poor Clement—poor Clement," she added, pitifully, "for I am going to marry you."

Clement said not a word. Had he not always known that it would come to this, and that Angélique would marry him?

"I always liked you," she said, "but I would not ruin you. I never liked him in that way; besides, he could take care of himself. I did not want him or his money, but I wanted to set my foot on the neck of Manneville, that never had a good word to say for me. And all the time he was abetting my enemies, plotting with them to bring scorn on me. The traitor, the traitor!" she added, her wrath rising. "Shall I tell you why he has done this, Clement? I kept him at arm's length, and he wanted his revenge. Well, I shall have mine," she pursued, shaking her bright, defiant head. "I shall have mine, and be beforehand with him," said she, laughing, "for, Clement, you will have our banns read out in church to-morrow, Sunday."

Clement nodded, and said, "Very well."

"And yet," she added, in a tone of tender pity, "I will give you the night to think over it, poor Clement; for you are alone in this world; there is not a soul to warn or advise you, no one to say, 'Do not marry that wicked Angélique'——"

"You are not wicked," he interrupted.

"I am, Clement. There is a devil in me that loves wickedness, just as you have in you a good angel that loves goodness. I do not say I am all bad, but—but I may try you more than you think or suspect."

Even in that imperfect light she could see the face of Clement darkening as she spoke.

"Angélique," he said, a little sternly, "I am not a jealous man, but my wife must be mine. She must not let other men look at her more than is seemly, or the good angel that you speak of would certainly leave me, and that devil you speak of too, come in his stead."

"Hush!" she cried with sudden anguish. "I never meant that, Clement, never! I will be true to you in life and in death."

"Then never mind about anything else," said he once more, quite composed.

"But I do mind. I shall be true to you. Yes, but I will not alter. Do not expect me to go to mass or vespers with you. I may do so, but only when I please. Remember, I say, I give you fair warning I will not take to your ways, but you may take to mine; and, I say it again, I am wicked, though you would never believe it."

"The curé is not in bed yet, for I saw the light shining in his window as we passed by; I shall speak to him at once," answered Clement, stubbornly.

Was it the great, faithful love in the young man's heart that moved Angélique; was it some sudden impulse of tenderness stirring in her own obdurate bosom that made her throw her arms around his neck, and, giving him that kiss which she had never granted to his rival, say softly, "Good-night, Clement," then vanish so swift and light that he had not a word to say before she was gone?

Monsieur Olivier was then curé of Manneville. He had been so forty years. He had christened all his parishioners save the elder ones. He had taught them their catechism, made them make their first communion, married them, buried them too, alas! and in more senses than one been as a father to them. His tenderness for these children of his, his indulgence for their errors, his charity for their distress when they fell into poverty or trouble, were unbounded. It was but natural that a filial feeling towards so kind a pastor should exist in the hearts of the people of Manneville. Even the reprobates loved and respected the curé, and the good approached him with that tender confidence which never exists save where much love has been received as well as given.

With a happy heart, but without fear, Clement now made his way back to Monsieur Olivier's house.

The curé was correcting the last sentence in his sermon when Clement walked into his little sitting-room, and in a quiet deliberate voice declared his errand. The priest dropped his pen, which made a great blot of ink on his walnut-wood table, and raised his mild blue eyes in grave surprise to Clement's face.

"My boy," he said, "have you thought over this well? You so pious and steady, and she so wild—poor child—so wild!"

"All that will alter when we are married," said Clement, with a confident smile.

"I trust so," replied the curé, hesitatingly. "I trust so, and that it is not you who will follow your wife's ways, but your wife who will follow yours."

There was a gentle warning in the curé's voice, but Clement no more heeded it than he had heeded Angélique's words on the cliff.

"Her ways are not bad ways," he said, stoutly; "but people will find fault with her whatever she does. I have known and watched her since she was a child, and I never saw any harm in her."

"She never enters God's house," said Monsieur Olivier with a sigh.

"The dear girl has never known better," answered Clement.

"When she does, she will alter."

"God grant it, Clement."

The next day was Sunday, and Angélique appeared at high mass, plainly dressed, for she was not rich, but so radiantly handsome that many a look involuntarily wandered towards the bench on

which she sat. Clement too was there, and Germain, and indeed all Manneville, for it is a church-going little place, and Angélique was one of the few persons whose appearance at mass would excite surprise. But it was not surprise, it was amazement that seized on the whole congregation when the curé, settling his spectacles, read out aloud the banns of marriage between Clement and Angélique. Everyone stared at everybody else, then all the looks rapidly converged on the girl and her lover. Angélique blushed modestly, and Clement gazed straight before him with a proud and happy look; but Germain turned sullen and seemed in a stupid dream: till, high mass being over, Clement met Angélique in the porch, and there took her arm and did what all Manneville does on every fine Sunday morning after mass; that is to say, went down to the beach, and, walking up and down, looked at the sea.

The lovers were the object of universal attention. Germain, however, was not among the lookers-on. He and Angélique had exchanged a look as she took her future husband's arm, and that look of mocking triumph of hers had pierced him through and through. It was one thing to jilt Angélique, and another thing to be jilted by her; one thing to leave her to mortification and solitude, and another to see her become the wife of Clement.

The courtship of Clement was quiet and uneventful. The lovers daily met on the cliff, and there, walking up and down side by side and looking at the wintry sea below them, they settled the little there was to settle in their future life. Clement trusted almost all to Angélique. He knew that in spite of her wild ways, she had plenty of sense, and he felt that if left to her own devices, she would know how to manage and make things comfortable. And Angélique was very good just then. She went every Sunday to high mass and vespers with Clement, and looked calmly indifferent when the banns of Germain and his cousin were read. She had been beforehand with him; that was all she cared for. And so time slipped on, and Clement and Angélique were married on a bright cold morning, and went and lived in his house at the end of the main street. As to that house which Angélique left, Germain, finding no tenant for it, had it unroofed and let it go to ruin rather than keep it in repair.

The wish of Clement's life was fulfilled at last. The girl he had loved since he could remember, was his wife. A pleasant, good-tempered, thrifty wife she made him, singing like a bird whilst he sat at his loom, and delighting his heart by going to church with him Sunday after Sunday. This lasted seven weeks, but when the eighth Sunday came round, Angélique unexpectedly declared to her husband:

"I cannot go with you, Clement."

"You are not unwell?" he asked hastily.

"Oh dear, no; but it is too dull. I tried to like it to please you, but I cannot. You must go to mass without me."

Clement tried to persuade, then to coax his wife into a change of purpose, but Angélique was obdurate.

"I told you it would be so," she said, coolly, "that I could not take to your ways. I am sorry to grieve you, my poor Clement, but I cannot help it; and you know I gave you fair warning."

Clement was too upright to say a word against this. Yes, he had been warned by Angélique herself, and he must abide by the lot he had chosen. He went to mass alone, but he found it hard, and the hardship grew as time passed, and Sunday after Sunday he left his wife at home and went to the little church of Manneville without her. This was the only drawback to his married happiness, which, otherwise, was great; but then, what a drawback! In his secret heart Clement always hoped that Angélique would alter, as he had so confidently assured the curé she would. To his pure and pious soul it seemed so cruel and so strange that a bar such as this should exist between him and his wife. Several times he tried to argue her into a better mood; in vain; Angélique heard him impatiently, then laughed at him, then said decisively:

"Clement, you only make me worse. I tell you it is no use. You took me such as I was, and you must be content with me. Alter I will not," she added, wilfully, "so you had better give it up."

Clement was silent, and from that day forth said not another word on the subject. Summer was over, autumn had come, and with it the fair of La Chapelle, which falls on Saint Martin's Day—namely, on the 11th of November. The morning was a rainy one, and Angélique, who was to go to the fair with her husband—he had business there—shook her head as she saw the heavy mist that had settled over the sea, and said shrewdly:

"I should only spoil my new cloak, Clement, if I went with you. Better stay at home and have a good warm supper ready for you when you come in—eh?"

Clement smiled, but spite the rain and the cloak, he would have liked his wife's company. His business at the fair would soon be over, he thought, and even if they came home late, and Angélique felt tired, could not he cook the supper? Every Frenchman is more or less of a cook, and Clement had had practice in his bachelor days. But he never opposed Angélique, so he yielded, and went to La Chapelle alone. He did not meet the man he wanted until late, and it was quite supper-time, and a black, murky night as well, when he came home and entered the kitchen parlour (the "*salle*," as it is called in Manneville) of his little house.

Bright, warm, and homely looked the *salle* as Clement raised the latch and walked in. The copper warming-pan, and the pewter utensils on the walls, which had been the pride of his late mother's heart, shone in the light of the bright wood fire that crackled in the deep, old-fashioned chimney. A most savoury smell came from the earthen marmite which hung from the pot-hook, and Angélique,

flushed and smiling, looked as handsome a young wife as ever rose to greet her husband after half-a-day's parting.

"God bless you, my dear heart," said Clement, giving her a hearty kiss.

"And did I not do well to stay at home?" she asked, helping him to take off his damp blouse, and deftly throwing another dry one over his neck and shoulders.

"Yes, but the day was a long one without you."

"Sit down and eat," was his wife's reply; and taking the ladle, she filled his deep plate with soup and put it down before him. "Did you see the commissioner from Rouen?" she asked, sitting down to her own meal as she spoke.

"I did. It is all settled. I am to have weaving enough for the whole winter."

Angélique looked glad, and her husband resumed, as he drew forth a tattered old pocket-book, all loose and torn, and pushed it towards her: "I found that, too, on my way home."

"You found a treasure!" mockingly said his wife.

She opened it with a look of contempt, which changed into one of startled surprise as a little bundle of bank-notes fell out on the table.

"Money!" she cried. "Look, Clement; one—three—five notes of one hundred francs each! You have found a treasure, after all! We are rich, rich, Clement!"

Her eyes sparkled—her cheeks were flushed; but Clement did not seem to understand.

"Money?" he repeated, "what money? whose money?"

"Ours; look!" and she fluttered the bank-notes in his face. She was strangely excited. That devil of covetousness who tempts so many of us, high and low, was tempting Clement's wife in that hour.

"Let me see that money," he said.

She handed him the notes at once, and uttered a triumphant: "Well, was I right?" as he examined them.

"Yes; five notes of one hundred francs each," he said slowly; "five hundred francs, as you say. But, Angélique, we are no richer than we were this morning, for we must return that money to its owner." And he deliberately put the notes back in the pocket-book as he spoke.

"Return it!" she cried, angrily. "Why, it is yours! Did you not find it? It is yours, I say. Do you not understand?"

"If you had lost your gold earrings, and that Mathurine, who thinks them so handsome, had found them, would they be hers?" asked Clement.

Angélique frowned, for she felt the strength of the argument; but she could not help retorting:

"Never say you wish to please me. How many things would not that money have got which cannot be got without it; but—do as you please." And she eat her cold soup with a sullen look.

Clement sighed, but he was too strictly honest to hesitate. He looked over the book to find out to whom it belonged, then striking his fist on the table till the cider jug and glasses rang: "Angélique," he exclaimed, "the money is Germain's. He was at the fair to-day, and the money is his."

"And you will return it," she asked, turning very pale: "return it to the coward who did his best to wrong and insult me!"

"Why not?" he answered, sternly. "You know I dislike the man as much as one Christian can dislike another; but the money is his, and I will return it."

"Never, never!" she cried; and, with the spring of a wild thing, she was by his side, snatched the pocket-book out of his hand, then passing swiftly to the other side of the table, faced him with wild defiance in her eyes.

Clement rose; then there was a pause, during which he and his wife stood looking at one another as they had never looked before.

"Give me back that book," he said, quietly. "I can take it by force, you know, but I had rather not."

"And you had better not," said Angélique, in a low tone. "You had better not, if you care for me, Clement. I tell you that if you give that money back to Germain, all is over between us. I will leave you and go from you, and you will never find me, long as you and I may live."

"If you went to the world's end I should find you," cried Clement, in a voice of mingled wrath and tenderness. "Ay, and bring you back, too. You are my wife, and I will never give you up, Angélique, never, never!"

"Oh, I know," she laughed, "you can send the gendarmes after me, and they will bring me back here. But can gendarmes make me stay?—Can they make me like and love you, Clement? No, no," she said, triumphantly, "I have you there; and remember that I can hate well—remember it!"

He looked at her with a heart full of trouble. Was this the fond wife who half an hour ago had come to meet him with open arms and smiling eyes?

"Angélique," he cried, in a voice of great anguish, "you cannot mean that I must turn thief to keep my wife's love?"

"I warned you," stubbornly said Angélique, "that you would never make me like yourself, but that I might make you like me. I gave you fair warning; you must abide by it now."

"Angélique, do not tempt me."

But Angélique only smiled and shook her bright head. He was yielding.

"Do not," he said again.

Again she shook her head at him and laughed; but in a moment, before she was aware of it, he was by her side, his strong arms were around her, and the book was in his strong right hand.

"And you think to prevail over me so," she cried, shaking herself free from him and springing to the door. "You think that I will let that traitor have his money back and spend it on his Geneviève?"

"And do *you* think I would let you have one sou of Germain's money!" cried Clement, with flashing eyes. "I would rather never see your face again than see you wear a cotton kerchief bought out of that five hundred francs!"

He had touched a chord in his wife's heart at last. The wrath passed from her handsome face. "Let us do this," she said, impetuously. "Throw that book into the fire, so that he has not the money; what do I care for it?"

"No, I cannot do that."

"Then good-bye to you. You know the cost of your fancy?"

She stood by the door with her hand on the latch, as if ready to fly out into the dark night away from him for ever and ever. He looked at her, but there was no relenting in her eyes. Germain's money was the price he must pay for her love. Standing thus, gazing into his face with smiling defiance, she looked like a beautiful but evil angel who had only come across his life to tempt him down into the depths of sin.

"Germain is rich; he does not want that money," thought Clement, "and I want my wife; she is all I have—I want my wife."

"Be it so," he said aloud; and, without taking time to think, he flung the book into the fire. He looked at it as the flames consumed it greedily, and he vaguely felt that in those flames the honour and the pride of his life were burning too.

Early the next morning old Baptiste, the drummer, went all over Manneville beating his drum, followed by a troop of boys, and every now and then pausing to proclaim, in his cracked and feeble voice, that Maître Germain Grandsire had lost a pocket-book last night, and would give a handsome reward to the individual who had found and would restore the said pocket-book with the five hundred francs that were in it. As if to render Angélique's revenge on her enemy more complete, the very first place where Baptiste stopped to make his proclamation was opposite her door. A bright morning had followed the murky night, and she stood on the threshold radiant as the sunshine that poured upon her. With a lurking smile on her rosy lips, she turned into the house and found her husband, who, pale as death, had stood listening behind her. She gave him a look of some scorn, and began to sing, in a voice as clear as a lark's, whilst he went back to his loom, which he had left to hear Baptiste's news.

"He is not working," thought Angélique, listening in vain for the click of the loom in one of the pauses of her song.

True, Clement was not working. He was thinking that there is a terrible attribute in sin: it is irreparable. "It is like death," thought Clement, in his quiet silent way. "It is done and it cannot be undone. I should work years before I could save five hundred francs. I can

never do it—never. I must live and die with that sin upon me. I can never atone—never atone.”

Yes, man may repent, God may forgive, and the world never know the sinner's wrong, but atonement is seldom or ever within the sinner's reach. This was the thought over which Clement now brooded. Angélique read it in his face when he came out at noon. She read, too, the look he cast at the fire as he sat down to dinner: a look that seemed to ask the pitiless flames why they had been so ready to do his bidding. She wished he would speak, say something, upbraid her; she wished he would do anything but look so downcast and sit there so silent. But words had never been in Clement's way, and he now neither reproached his wife nor opened his heart to her. She guessed much indeed, and felt secret wrath at his remorse; but she never guessed how keen it was, nor how deep was his trouble, till Sunday came round. Angélique was a fond and careful wife, on this Sunday morning she laid as usual her husband's clean linen and black silk necktie on the bed in their room. She might not go to mass with Clement, but she liked to see him look his best in the church of Manneville, and she was taking down his coat to brush it, when he said to her:

“You need not, Angélique. I am not going to mass to-day.”

“Are you not well?” she asked, turning round quickly.

“Quite well; but I am not going to mass.”

“Why so?”

“I have no business in the church,” he said, gloomily, and he left the room as he spoke, and went down to the little patch of garden behind the house. His wife looked at him from the window, and saw him walking listlessly up and down, whilst the November sun was shining, and the church bells filled the air with their music.

“I knew it,” she cried, flinging herself across the bed in her woe. “I told him so; I have ruined him, and he is a lost man.” She felt no remorse, and no shame. She would have confessed her deed to all Manneville, and laughed in Germain's face, but the evil she had wrought Clement pierced her very heart with sorrow.

A week after this there broke over Manneville such a storm as had not been known within the memory of man. Thunder filled the air with clamour, and lightning flashed across the black sky, and a wild hurricane swept over the cliffs and went out to meet the roaring waves of the sea. Clement's daily task was over, and he had taken his evening meal with his wife; a silent one, he so rarely spoke now; when he suddenly rose and said:

“I must go and give it a look.” He walked out as he spoke without answering, without hearing perhaps, Angélique's rejoinder:

“Wait for me, Clement.”

“He would have heard me formerly,” thought she, in bitter mortification, but she did not follow him, till the stream of people going by tempted her to. Why should she stay within? She locked the

door and went out. The night was frightful, but Angélique was fearless and sure of foot. Spite the fury of the wind, she made her way to the beach, and was soon one of the crowd that had gathered there to see what could be seen of the tempest that now raged all along the shore. What a night it was! Darkness above, a gleam of white foam below, fiery streaks of light, a pealing of thunder, an incessant roaring of the great waves. What was man in such a turmoil of the elements as this? Angélique was filled with awe; she would have liked to feel her husband near her; but she looked in vain for him. Other faces she saw whenever the lightning flashed, but not his. "Why should I wait and look for one who does not want me?" thought Clement's wife, angrily; and she was turning homewards when the voices of a group of men caught her ear in a lull of the storm and compelled her to stand and listen. What mad, wild tale were they telling?

The strange guest at the inn was sending off a messenger with a telegram to Saint Dizier when the storm began. The messenger at once refused to go. He could not cross the cliffs on such a night. The gentleman threatened, coaxed, bribed, in vain. The matter was one of life and death to him, he said.

"Yes," answered the man, "and so it was to him life and death."

Then the stranger came amongst the people on the beach, and asked what brave fellow would do his errand for a good round sum of money.

"How much will you give?" asked a voice from the crowd. "It was Jean's, you know," said the speaker.

"No, it was not Jean's; it was Mathieu's," said other voices.

"How much do you want?"

"Five hundred francs."

The stranger demurred, then yielded. The bargain was struck, the man went. "And Clement will never reach Saint Dizier, and never give in the telegram, and never come back," said the last speaker. "For you are all wrong, it was Clement, and not Mathieu."

"Never—never," cried Angélique, sinking down on the hard shingle, and tearing her fair hair. "Never—never."

Fated words that came but too true. In vain did Clement give his young life to earn the money that should redeem his sin. The story of that cruel night was never rightly known, but what there was none to tell, everyone could easily surmise. When, with the first streak of light, Angélique found her husband in that hollow of the cliff against which the fury of the hurricane had dashed him, almost as soon as he had attempted to cross the downs, he was dying, and all he could or would say was, "Do not move me," and "send for the curé."

"He is here," she answered, for she had not come alone.

As soon as the wrath of the night had subsided, all the men of

Manneville, with the maire and the curé at their head, had turned out to look for Clement.

"Here I am, my poor fellow," said the curé, coming forward.

Clement moaned, then looked at his wife as much as to say, "Tell him."

"Stand back all of you," said she, almost fiercely as she motioned the crowd away with an imperious gesture of her hand; "And you, Monsieur le Curé," she added in a low tone, "come nearer and listen, and I will tell you Clement's confession."

It was a strange and awful scene. No trace of wrath in the clear morning sky: Nature seeming to waken to sweetness and light, as after the calmest of slumbers: a dying man looking his last at this lovely world, and on her knees by him a sinning woman telling a mild, white-haired priest the story of the wrong-doing that was costing life to one and to the other bitter remorse and life-long tears.

"He did it, but I made him do it," said Angelique, when the tale was told. "And now, Clement, hear me. You know me, and that to what I say I keep. You may die in peace. The money shall be repaid. I tell you it shall be," she added, in a voice of subdued passion and energy. "And yet no one shall ever know. Though I work till I am old and grey, it shall be paid back, and no one save the curé here shall ever know—shall ever know; and, Clement, I know you would like to meet me in the next world. Well then, so help me Heaven, I will do my best to live here so as to meet you there."

Her cheeks were flushed, her dry eyes burned like fire as she raised her hand to Heaven in solemn protest. A faint smile passed over the pallid face of the dying man. Tears were flowing down the cheeks of the priest, his dealings had been with small sins and common sinners. Never with anything so tragic as this story of Clement and his wife.

"That will do, child," said he, motioning her away. "You must leave me with your husband."

She moved away out of hearing and knelt on the hard stones with her eyes fixed on Clement's face. The curé was bending towards him, uttering a few whispered words of comfort. "You repent your sin, do you not? Yes, poor fellow—poor fellow. Well, then, do not despair. Think of Christ on the cross; think of the penitent thief whose life of crime was effaced in one moment, and hope for mercy."

Clement could not speak, but the look of his sunken eyes assented to every word. The priest raised his hand, and in the name of Heaven absolved the penitent sinner, and even as the solemn words were uttered, that poor sinner's soul passed away.

Thus ended the brief story of Angélique's wedded life and Clement's ill-fated love. And no one knew, no one suspected, how and why Clement had allowed five hundred francs to tempt him to almost certain death. People wondered, indeed, but after a time they forgot to think it so strange: and Angélique, whom no one would dream

of questioning, was left to her sorrow and her widowhood. She bore both in stoic silence, asking comfort or counsel from none. She sold off all that her husband had left, also what belonged to herself, and when her home was bare she made up a little bundle and turned her back upon Manneville. At once unkind tongues were busy at Angélique's expense. They knew what it was. She had coveted a gold watch and chain, and it was to get them for her that poor Clement had given his life, and now she had gone away from Manneville to trade in her beauty and get some other husband in another place, where her wickedness was less known. For once, Monsieur Olivier, the curé, so gentle and so mild, got really angry. He silenced the scandal-mongers individually, as well as he could, and preached a vigorous sermon against scandal in general, for the benefit of all. He knew whither Angélique was gone and with what purpose, and though he could explain nothing, his kind heart would not let her be wronged undefended. "The poor child has no one to stand by her now," he said; "her husband is dead, she is away, and how dare any of you try and take her good name from her." No more was said within his hearing, but Manneville thought none the better of poor Angélique.

She had been gone a month, when to his surprise the curé met her one morning at the churchyard gate carrying her bundle in her hand.

"Why, Angélique," said he, kindly, "have you come back to us?" Angélique shook her head.

"I only came back to see his grave. I did not like where I was. I did not earn money fast enough," she added, sadly. "My Clement must not wait too long."

"Then stay with us in Manneville, Angélique."

"Live in the same place with Germain Grandsire?" she cried, her blue eyes flashing. "Never. *He* drove me wild, and I drove *him* to do it and to die."

"Child," said Monsieur Olivier, gently, "you must forgive Germain. The hand of God has been heavy upon him since you left us. His wife has gone raving mad: he dare not put her in an asylum, lest her friends should take her away and claim all her money back. She was rich, you know, and no one can find who will stay and mind her in his own house. Can you not forgive him now?" added the curé, gently.

But Angélique did not seem to heed him. Her face lit with sudden hope.

"Mad! he sent her mad," she cried. "I know he did. Monsieur le Curé, I will take care of his mad wife, and he shall pay me well to do it."

"You, Angélique? but ——"

"I am afraid of nothing," she broke in, with her dauntless look. "I will do it."

She went swiftly down the path before the curé could utter another word. In a few minutes she had reached Germain Grand-sire's great, old farm, and made her way to his presence. She found him in the low, dark *salle*, standing by a dingy *secrétaire* on which money was spread. He turned round sharply as she came in.

"Why, who are you?" he began, "and—what?" Then he paused, and stared at her.

"I am Angélique," said she; "and I know what you want," she added, by way of greeting. "I come to do it for you?"

"You!"

"Yes," she resumed, "why not? I am strong, and I think you know that I am fearless. I will take care of her, and you need not send her out of the house and let her friends have her back again. Of course you want to keep your rich wife, Germain," said Angélique, with a smile. "Well, I will do it; only you must pay me well for it—very well indeed. If she dies to-morrow, you must give me—let me see," she added, seeming to meditate, "we will say six hundred francs, and if she lives a year you need give me no more—you understand?"

Yes, Germain did understand, and he stared in mingled doubt and amazement at the beautiful woman whom he had once liked after a fashion of his own.

"Six hundred francs is too much," said he at length. "Besides——"

A fearful shriek, which rang through the whole house, interrupted him. Angélique smiled.

"Too much," she said. "You think it too much, and you can find no one to do it for love or money."

He tried to bargain, but Angélique only walked to the door.

"Have it then," he grumbled. "Yet it is too much; for suppose, as you say, she dies to-morrow."

But he yielded, and took her at once to the darkened room where Geneviève, bound hand and foot, now spent her days.

"Take care," he cried, as he opened the door and stepped back hastily. "She has got loose."

Angélique looked round at him in quiet scorn, walked into the room alone and shut the door behind her. The place was dark, but a ray of light slipped in through the shutters and showed her Germain's wife standing free from her bonds with wild looks and dishevelled hair.

Angélique threw the window open and gazed steadily at the mad woman, who scowled in return.

"Geneviève, I am strong," she said, "and I am not afraid, and I will be kind to you; but"—she raised her finger—"you must obey me."

That fearless look, that low, even voice quelled Geneviève's rage in a moment. She began to moan and weep.

"I will be kind to you," said Angélique again. "And now sit down and let me comb your hair."

Geneviève obeyed in stupid silence, and the power thus acquired in that first moment Angélique lost no more. She ruled Geneviève like a child; cure her she could not, but master her she did. Only at what cost did she do so? Geneviève would sit in a dark room, and Angélique had to sit with her there. She moaned all day long, talking of hidden enemies who sought her life, and Angélique had to sit and listen. She spent sleepless nights, and Angélique had to watch her through them. On Sunday mornings, indeed, she bound her firmly, and left her to go to early mass, for she had promised Clement that his ways should be her ways, and she kept her word. But otherwise she stayed with her always; and days and weeks and months of this terrible life wore on: till, when summer ended and autumn set in, death mercifully released the mad woman and her keeper.

The funeral was scarcely over when Angélique appeared before her master with her bundle in her hand.

"Maitre Germain," she said, "your wife is dead. I did my duty by her. Will you pay me my wages, six hundred francs."

Germain's face fell.

"Six hundred francs, and the year is not out," said he. "Angélique, it is too much. You see I have had losses. I lost five hundred francs last Saint Martin's day, and that money was to bring me in twenty, fifty per cent, and I lost it! And my wife's illness cost me a world of money, and now you want six hundred francs."

"Deny me that money if you dare," said Angélique, with a flash in her blue eyes.

And he did not dare to deny it. He fumbled at his pocket-book and brought out six notes of a hundred francs each, and placed them sullenly before her. She looked at the money like one in a dream, but did not attempt to touch it.

"I think I will not take it," she said. "I might lose or spend it; better leave it to you, Germain. You will turn it to use, and—yes, I will leave it to you."

"But you are not giving it to me," said Germain, staring. "You will claim it from me some day."

"Ay, some day," she answered, with a short laugh, "we will settle our accounts, do not fear; we will on the great day of all, if on no other. In the meanwhile keep the money and use it. I know what I am doing."

"Well, as you say, it will be safer with me," he muttered, putting the notes back in his pocket-book, and looking at her stealthily as he spoke. She had grown thin, but there was a flush on her cheeks and a light in her eyes, and she had never been more beautiful and stately than she was now.

"Why do you go?" he asked.

"Why should I stay?"

"Why do you go?" he persisted. "We might marry now, you know," he added, slowly; "after a while, of course."

Angélique laughed in his face. "The last words I spoke to my Clement were that I should so behave in this world that I hoped we should meet in the next," she answered, in her old defiant way. "Do you think it is as *your* wife my Clement would like to meet me there! Besides, take my advice, you were not over kind to poor Geneviève; be in no hurry to look for another wife. And now good-bye and good luck to you, Maitre Germain Grandsire."

With a cool nod she left him. He stared after her moodily. "She is handsomer than ever, the beggarly beauty," he muttered; "yet I am glad she said no; she is only a beggar, after all." On leaving the farm Angélique went up the main street to the curé's house. The curé was out, said the servant.

"Bid him good-bye for me," said Angélique. "I am leaving Manneville."

She went on her way and climbed up the Cliff, where Clement and she had so often met. She sat on the broad, flat stone where he used to sit, and thence she saw in the mellow light of the setting sun the ruins of her old home; the sea which Clement and she had looked at together; the hollow of the cliff where the fierce hurricane had dashed him, and on the other side of the valley the little churchyard where he lay.

There are hours and moods in which we all go over our old life, be the retrospect brief or long, and such an hour was this to Angélique. A pause, a resting-place between the future and the past, in which thought, like a weary bird of passage, folded its drooping wings awhile and let the present go by. For what the future might yet be, she cared nothing; it mattered so little what became of her now: but, oh! how dark, and drear, and tragic had been the past—that past, of which her own hands had woven warp and woof! could she ever forget it? could she ever put it by like a thing that we would look at no more? Ah! surely never—never.

The sound of a step roused her from her dark dream.

"I guessed you were here," said a voice behind her.

She looked up and rose slowly to face the curé, who came up all breathless with his rapid ascent.

"Yes," she answered, looking at him dreamily. "I came and told him."

"Child," he remonstrated, gently.

"I came and told him," she pursued, with tears in her eyes and a smile on her lips as life seemed to come back to her sad young face. "I think the dead hear us, Monsieur le Curé. I am sure my Clement hears me, I talk to him so often and he seems to answer. And I am glad now, for a while ago I felt as if he were happy; it was like a little whisper, but I felt it. Yes, I am sure he is glad, and so as it is all over, I can go away for good. And good-bye to you, Monsieur le Curé, and God's blessing be on you for all your kindness."

Her voice was gentle and low; this was scarcely like the Angélique of old times, but the priest knew that nature is strong, and he would have liked to keep the wayward girl under his wing. He tried to persuade her to stay, but Angélique was Angélique still, she had a will of her own and was obdurate. "But money," argued Monsieur Olivier, "have you got money enough? I know that Germain paid you well, but I can guess how you disposed of the money, poor child. Have you any of it left?"

"Not a sou of it would I keep," said she, with the old flash in her eyes. "I left it all to him—all, and he rejoiced in it; and, as I told him, we will settle accounts on the great judgment day, and let him accuse my Clement then if he dare! No, my husband gave his blood and I gave the gold, and we are quits. Keep any of his money! Did not my Clement once tell me he would rather never see my face again than that I should wear a cotton kerchief bought with it; but I have this," said she, taking a gold piece from the bosom of her dress, where she wore it sewed up in a piece of cloth like a locket. "It remained to me after I sold his things, and it will do. There will be a blessing in it, Monsieur le Curé, as there was a curse in that other money and would ever have been. Here I cannot stay," she continued, more calmly. "My task is done. The place would kill me; worse, it might make me wicked again. I am young and strong; I must fight my way through the world. It will tame me," she added, "for I am still a bit wild, Monsieur le Curé."

"Yes, but you have been a good child. God bless you."

He gently laid his hand on her head; she took his other hand, raised it to her lips, and said softly:

"You will pray for me, will you not?"

"Ay, child. Well, God be with you since you will go. Perhaps it is best," he thought, looking at her as she stood before him in all the pride and strength of her gentle and grand beauty, a creature sorely chastised, but not yet conquered. "Only, where are you going?"

Perhaps Angélique did not know this herself: perhaps, with her old wilfulness, she did not care to answer the question.

"Who knows!" said she, with a half wistful look. "The world is wide, and there are many roads that lead from Manneville. Only one thing you may be sure of—no road that would part me from him will I ever take."

These were her last words.

She took up her bundle, and, with one sad look around her, she walked down the path that led to the sea. He stood and watched her. She shunned the village and entered the lane that lies at the back of the houses. The sun had long left it. It was shadowy and dim, and in the dimness and the shadow, the figure of Angélique slowly vanished, and thus passed away for ever from Manneville.

LEE, THE LETTER-MAN.

IN a side lane of Timberdale, just off the churchyard, was the cottage of Jael Batty, whose name you have heard before. Side by side with it stood another cottage, inhabited by Lee, the assistant letter-carrier ; or, as Timberdale generally called him, the letter-man. These cottages had a lively look-out, the farrier's shop and a few thatched hayricks opposite ; sideways, the tombstones in the graveyard.

Some men are lucky in life, others are unlucky. Andrew Lee was in the latter category. He had begun life as a promising farmer, but came down in the world. First of all, he had to pay a heap of money for some man who had persuaded him to become his security, and that stripped him of his means. Afterwards a series of ill-fortune set in on the farm : crops failed, cattle died, and Lee was sold-up. Since then he had tried at this, and tried at that ; been in turn a farmer's labourer, an agent for coal, and the proprietor of a shop devoted to the benefit of the younger members of the community, its speciality being bull's-eyes and besoms for birch-rods. For some few years now he had settled down in this cottage next door to Jael Batty's, and carried out the letters at fourteen shillings a week.

There were two letter-men, Spicer and Lee. But there need not have been two, only that Timberdale was so straggling a parish, the houses in it lying far and wide. Like other things in this world, fortune, even in so trifling a matter as these two postmen, was not dealt out equally. Spicer had the least work, for he took the home delivery, and had the most pay ; Lee did all the country tramping, and had only the fourteen shillings. But when the place was offered to Lee he was at a very low ebb indeed, and took it thankfully, and thought he was set-up in riches for life, for, as you know, we estimate things by contrast.

Andrew Lee was not unlucky in his fortunes only. Of his three children not any had prospered. The son married all too young ; within a year he and his wife were both dead, leaving a baby-boy to Lee as a legacy. The elder daughter had emigrated to the other end of the world with her husband ; and the younger daughter had a history. She was pretty and good and gentle, but just a goose. Goose that she was, though, all the parish liked Mamie Lee.

About four years before the time I am telling of, there came a soldier to Timberdale, on a visit to Spicer the letter-carrier, one James West. He was related to Spicer's wife ; her nephew, or cousin, or something of that ; a tall, good-looking, merry-tempered dragoon with a dashing carriage and a dashing tongue ; and he ran

away with the heart of Mamie Lee. That might not so much have mattered in the long-run, for such privilege is universally allowed to the sons of Mars ; but he also ran away with her. One fine morning Mr. James West was missing from Timberdale, and Mamie Lee was missing also. The parish went into a rapture of indignation over it, not so much with him as with her ; called her a "baggage," and hoped her folly would come home to her. Poor old Lee thought he had got his death-blow, and his hair turned suddenly grey.

Not more than twelve months had gone by when she was back again. Jael Batty was running out one evening to get a pound of sugar at Salmon's shop, when she met a young woman with a bundle staggering down the lane, and keeping under the side of the hedge as if she were afraid of falling, or else did not want to be seen. Too weak to carry the bundle, she seemed ready to sink at every step. Jael Batty, who had her curiosity like other people, though she was deaf, peered into the bent face, and brought herself up with a shriek.

"What, is it you, Mamie Lee ! Well, the impudence of this ! How on earth could you pick up the brass to come here ? "

"Are my poor father and mother alive ? Do they still live here ? " faltered Mamie, turning her piteous white face to Jael.

"They be ; both alive ; but it's no thanks to you. If they——Oh, if I don't believe——What have you got in that ragged old shawl ? "

"It's my baby," answered Mamie ; and she passed on.

Andrew Lee took her in amidst sobs and tears, and thanked Heaven she was come back, and welcomed her unreasonably. The parish went on at him for it, showering down plenty of abuse, and asking whether he did not feel ashamed of himself. There was even a talk of his post as letter-carrier being taken from him, but it came to nothing. Rymer was postmaster then ; and he was a man of too much sorrow himself to inflict it needlessly upon another. On the contrary, he sent down cordials and tonics and things for Mamie, who had had a fever and come home dilapidated as to strength, and never charged for them. Thomas Rymer's own heart was slowly breaking, so he could feel for her.

The best or the worst of it was, that Mamie said she was married. Which assertion was of course not believed, and only added to her sin in the eyes of Timberdale. The tale she told was this. That James West had taken her straight to some town, where he had previously had the banns put up, and married her there. The day after the marriage they had sailed for Ireland, whither he had to hasten to join his regiment, his leave of absence having expired. At the end of some seven or eight months, the regiment was ordered to India, and he departed with it, leaving her in her obscure lodging at Cork. By-and-by her baby was born ; she was very ill then, very ; had fever and a cough, and sundry other complications ; and what with lying ill eight weeks, and being obliged to pay a doctor and a nurse

all that while, besides other expenses, she spent all the money Mr. James West left with her, and had no choice between starvation and coming back to Timberdale.

You should have heard how this account was scoffed at. The illness, and the baby, and the poverty nobody disputed—they were plain enough to be seen by all Timberdale; and what else could she expect, they'd like to know. But when she came to talk about the church (or rather, old Lee for her, second-hand, for she was not at all a person now to be spoken to by Timberdale) then their tongues were let loose in all kinds of inconvenient questions. *Which* was the town?—and which was the church in it?—and where were her "marriage lines"? Mamie could give no answer at all. She did not know the name of the town, or where it was situated. James had taken her with him in the train to it, and that was all she knew; and she did not know the name of the church or the clergyman; and as to marriage lines, she had never heard of any. So, as Timberdale said, what could you make out of this, save one thing—that Mr. Jim West had been a deep rogue, and taken her in. At best, it could have been but a factitious ceremony; perhaps in some barn, got up like a church for the occasion, said the more tolerant, willing to give excuse for pretty Mamie if they could; but the chief portion of Timberdale looked upon the whole as an out-and-out invention.

Poor Andrew Lee had never taken a hopeful view of the affair from the first; but he held to the more tolerant opinion that Mamie had been herself deceived, and he could not help being cool to Spicer in consequence. Spicer in retaliation threw all the blame upon Mamie, and held up Mr. James West as a shining paragon of virtue.

But, as the time went on, and no news, no letter, or other token arrived from West, Mamie herself gave in. That he had deceived her, she slowly became convinced of, and despair took hold of her heart. Timberdale might have the satisfaction of knowing that she judged herself just as humbly and bitterly as they judged her, and was grieving herself to a shadow. Three years had passed now since her return, and the affair was an event of the past; and Mamie wore, metaphorically, the white sheet of penitence, and hardly dared to show her face outside the cottage door.

But you may easily see how all this, besides the sorrow, told upon Lee. Fourteen shillings a-week for a man and his wife to exist upon cannot be called much, especially if they have seen better days and been used to better living. When the first grandchild, poor little orphan, arrived to be kept, he and his wife both thought it hard, though quite willing to take him; and now they had Mamie and another grandchild. This young one was named Jemima, for Mamie had called her after her faithless husband. Five people and fourteen shillings a-week, and provisions dear, and house-rent to pay, and Lee's shoes perpetually wanting to be mended! One or two

generous individuals grew rather fond of telling Lee that he would be better off in the union.

It was November weather. A cold, dark, biting, sharp, drizzly morning. Andrew Lee got up betimes, as usual : he had to be out soon after seven to be ready for his letter delivery. In the kitchen, when he entered it, he found his daughter there before him, coaxing the kettle to boil on the handful of fire, that she might make him his cup of tea and give him his breakfast. She was getting uncommonly weak and shadowy-looking now : a little woman, not much more yet than a girl, with a shawl folded about her shivering shoulders, a hacking cough, and a mild, non-resisting face. Her father had lately told her that he would not have her get up in a morning, she was not fit for it ; what he wanted done he could do himself.

"Now, Mamie, why are you here ? You should attend to what I say, child."

She got up from her knees and turned her sad brown eyes towards him : bright and sweet eyes once, but now dimmed with the tears and sorrow of the last three years.

"I am better up ; I am indeed, father. Not sleeping much, I get tired of lying : and my cough is worse a-bed."

He sat down to his cup of tea and to the bread she placed before him. Some mornings there was a little butter, or dripping, or, mayhap, bacon fat ; but this morning he had to eat his bread dry. It was getting near the end of the week, and the purse ran low. Lee had a horror of debt, and would never let his people run into it for the smallest sum if he knew it.

"It's poor fare for you this morning, father ; but I'll try and get a morsel of boiled pork for dinner and we'll have it ready early. I expect to be paid to-day for the bit of work I have been doing for young Mrs. Ashton. Some of those greens down by the apple trees want cutting : they'll be nice with a bit of pork."

Lee turned his eyes in the direction of the greens and the apple trees : but the window was misty, and he could only see the drizzle of rain-drops on the panes. As he sat there, a thought came into his head that he was beginning rapidly to feel old ; old, and worn, and shaky. Trouble ages a man more than work, more than time ; and Lee never looked at the wan face of his daughter, and at its marks of sad repentance, but he felt anew the sting which was always pricking him more or less. What with that, and his difficulty to keep the pot boiling, and his general state of shakiness, Lee was older than his years. Timberdale had got into the habit of calling him Old Lee, you see ; but he was not sixty yet. He had a nice face ; when it was a young face it must have been like Mamie's. It had furrows in it now, and his scanty grey-locks hung down on each side of it.

Putting on his top-coat, which was about as thin as those remarkable sheets told of by Brian O'Linn, Lee went out buttoning it.

The rain had ceased, but the cold wind took him as he went down the narrow garden-path, and he could not help shivering.

"It's a bitter wind to-day, father; in the north-east, I think," said Mamie, standing at the door to shut it after him. "I hope there'll be no letters for Crabb."

Lee, as he pressed along in the teeth of the cruel wind, was hoping the same. Salmon the grocer, who had taken the post-office when the late Thomas Rymer gave it up, was sorting the letters in the room behind the shop when Lee went in. Spicer, a lithe, active, dark-eyed man of forty-five, stood at the end of the table waiting for his bag. Lee went and stood beside him, giving him a brief good morning: he had not taken kindly to the man since West ran away with Mamie.

"A light load this morning," remarked Mr. Salmon to Spicer, as he handed him his appropriate bag. "And here's yours, Lee," he added a minute after: "not heavy, either. Too cold for people to write, I suppose."

"Anything for Crabb, sir?"

"For Crabb? Well, yes, I think there is. For the Rector."

Upon going out, Spicer turned one way, Lee the other. Spicer's district was easy as play; Lee's was a regular country tramp, the farm-houses lying in all the four points of the compass. The longest tramp was over to us at Crabb. And why the two houses, our own and Coney's farm, should be comprised in the Timberdale delivery, instead of that of Crabb, people could not understand. It was so, however, and nobody bestirred himself to alter it. For one thing, we were not often at Crabb Cot, and the Coneys did not have many letters, so it was not like an every-day delivery: we chanced to be there just now.

The letter spoken of by Salmon, which would bring Lee to Crabb this morning, was for the Reverend Herbert Tanerton, Rector of Timberdale. He had married a niece of Mr. Coney's, and was now staying with her at the farm on a week's visit, and had given orders to Salmon that his letters, during that week, were to be delivered at the farm instead of the rectory.

Lee finally got through his work, all but this one letter, and turned his steps our way. As ill-luck had it—the poor fellow thought it so afterwards—he could not take the short and sheltered way through Crabb Ravine, for he had letters that morning for Sir Robert Tenby, at Bellwood, and also for the Stone House on the way to it. By the time he turned on the solitary road that led to Crabb, Lee was nearly blown to smithereens by the fierce north-east wind, and chilled to the marrow. All his bones ached; he felt low, frozen, ill, and wondered whether he should get over the ground without breaking down.

"I wish I might have a whiff at my pipe!"

A pipe is to many people the panacea for all earthly discomfort;

it was so to Lee. But only in the previous February had occurred that damage to Helen Whitney's letter, already told of; and Lee was afraid to risk a similar mishap again. He carried Salmon's general orders with him: not to smoke during his round. Once the letters were delivered, he might do so.

His weak grey hair blowing about, his thin and shrunken frame shivering and shaking as the blasts took him, his empty post-bag thrust into his pocket and the Rector's letter in his hand, Lee toiled along on his weary way. To a strong man the walk would have been nothing, and not much to Lee in fairer weather. It was the cold and wind that tired him. And though, after giving vent to the above wish, he held out a little while, presently he could resist the comfort no longer, but drew forth his pipe and struck a match to light it.

How it occurred he never knew, never knew to his dying day; but the flame from the match caught the letter, and set it alight. It was that thin foreign paper that catches so quickly, and the match was obstinate, and the wind blew the flame about. He pressed the fire out with his hands, but a portion of the letter was burnt.

If Timbuctoo, or some other far-away place had been within the distance of a man's legs, Lee would have made off for it straight. His pipe on the ground, the burnt letter underneath his horrified gaze, and his hair raised on end, stood he. What on earth should he do? It had been only a pleasant young lady's letter last time; now it was the stern rector's.

There was only one thing that he could do—go on with the letter to its destination. It often happens in these distressing catastrophes that the one only course open is the least palatable. His pipe hidden away in his pocket—for Lee had had enough of it for that morning—and the damaged letter humbly held out in his hand, Lee made his approach to the farm.

I chanced to be standing at its door with Tom Coney and Tod. Those two were going out shooting, and the Squire had sent me running across the road with a message to them. Lee came up, and with a face that seemed greyer than usual, and a voice from which most of its sound had departed, he told his tale.

Tom Coney gave a whistle. "Oh, by George, Lee, [won't you catch it! The Rector ——"

"The Rector's a regular Martinet, you know," Tom Coney was about to add, but he was stopped by the appearance of the Rector himself.

Herbert Tanerton had chanced to be in the little oak-panelled hall and caught the drift of the tale. A frown sat on his cold face as he came forward, a frown that would have befitted an old face better than a young one.

He was not loud. He did not fly into a passion, as Helen Whitney did. He just took the unfortunate letter in his hand, and looked at it, and looked at Lee, and spoke quietly and coldly.

"This is, I believe, the second time you have burnt the letters," and Lee dared not deny it.

"And in direct defiance of orders. You are not allowed to smoke when on your rounds."

"I'll never attempt to smoke again, when on my round, as long as I live, sir, if you'll only be pleased to look over it this time," gasped Lee, holding up his hands in a piteous way. But the rector was one who went in for "duty," and the appeal found no favour with him.

"No," said he, "it would be to encourage wrong doing, Lee. Meet me at eleven o'clock at Salmon's."

"Never again, sir, as long as I live!" pleaded Lee. "I'll give you my word of that, sir; and I never broke it yet. Oh, sir, if you will but have pity upon me, and not report me!"

"At eleven o'clock," repeated Herbert Tanerton, decisively, as he turned indoors again.

"What an old stupid you must be!" cried Tod to Lee. "He won't excuse you; he is the wrong sort of parson to do it."

"And a pretty kettle of fish you've made of it!" added Tom Coney. "I'd not have minded much, if it had been my letter; but he is different, you know."

Poor Lee turned his eyes on me: perhaps remembering that he had asked me, the other time, to stand his friend with Miss Whitney. Nobody could be his friend now: when the rector took up a grievance he did not let it go again; especially if it were his own. Good-hearted Jack, his sailor-brother, would have screened Lee, though all the letters in the parish got burnt.

At eleven o'clock precisely the Reverend Herbert Tanerton entered Salmon's shop; and poor Lee, not daring to disobey his mandate, crept in after him. They had it out in the room behind. Salmon was properly severe; told Lee he was not sure but the offence involved penal servitude, and that he deserved hanging. A prosperous tradesman in his small orbit, the man was naturally inclined to be dictatorial, and was ambitious of standing well with his betters, especially the rector. Lee was suspended there and then; and Spicer was told that for a time, until other arrangements were made, he must do double duty. Spicer, vexed at this, for it would take him so much the more time from his legitimate business, that of horse doctor, told Lee he was a fool, and deserved not only hanging but drawing and quartering.

"What's up?" asked Ben Rymer, crossing the road from his own shop to accost Lee, as the latter came out of Salmon's. Ben was the chemist now, and steady; and Ben, it was said, would soon pass his examination for surgeon. He had his hands in his pockets and his white apron on, for Mr. Ben Rymer had no false pride, and would as soon show himself to Timberdale in an apron as in a dress coat.

Lee told his tale, confessing the sin of the morning. Mr. Rymer

nodded his head significantly several times as he heard it, and pushed his red hair from his capacious forehead.

"They'll not look over it this time, Lee."

"If I could but get some one to be my friend with the rector, and ask him to forgive me," said Lee. "Had your father been alive, Mr. Rymer, I think he would have done it for me."

"Very likely. No good to ask me—if that's what you are hinting at. The rector looks upon me as a black sheep and turns on me the cold shoulder. But I don't think he is one to listen, Lee, though the King came to ask him."

"What I shall do I don't know," bewailed Lee. "If the place is stopped, the pay stops, and I've not another shilling in the world or the means of earning one. My wife's ailing; and Mamie gets worse day by day; and there are the two little ones. They are all upon me."

"Some people here say, Lee, that you should have sent Mamie and her young one to the workhouse, and not have charged yourself with them."

"True, sir, several have told me that. But people don't know what a father's feelings are till they experience them. Mamie was my own child that I had dandled on my knee, and watched grow up in her pretty ways, and I was fonder of her than any earthly thing. The workhouse might not have taken her in."

"She had forfeited all claim on you. And come home only to break your heart."

"True," meekly assented Lee. "But the Lord has told us we are to forgive, not seven times, but seventy times seven. If I had turned her adrift from my door and heart, sir, who knows but I might have been driven adrift myself at the Last Day."

Evidently it was of no use talking to one so unreasonable as Lee. And Mr. Ben Rymer turned back to his shop. A customer was entering it with a prescription and a medicine bottle.

II.

One day in the Christmas week, Mrs. Todhetley despatched me to Timberdale through the snow for a box of those delectable "Household Pills" which have been mentioned before: an invention of the late Mr. Rymer's, and continued to be made up by Ben. Ben was behind the counter as usual, when I entered, and shook the snow off my boots on the door mat.

"Anything else?" he asked me, wrapping up the box.

"Not to-day. There goes old Lee! How thin he looks!"

"Starvation," said Ben, craning his long neck to look between the coloured globes at Lee on the other side the way. "Lee has nothing coming in now."

"What do they all live upon?"

"Goodness knows. Upon things that he pledges, and the vegetables in the garden. I was in there last night, and I can tell you it was a picture, Mr. Johnny Ludlow."

"A picture of what?"

"Misery: distress: hopelessness. It is several weeks now since Lee earned anything, and they have been all that while upon short commons. Some days on no commons at all, I expect."

"But what took you there?"

"I heard such an account of the girl — Mamie — yesterday afternoon; of her cough and her weakness; that I thought I'd see if any of my drugs would do her good. But it's food they all want."

"Is Mamie very ill?"

"Very ill, indeed. I'm not sure but she's dying."

"It's a dreadful thing."

"One can't ask too many professional questions—people are down upon you for that before you have passed," resumed Ben, alluding to his not being qualified. "But I sent her in a cordial or two, and I spoke to Darbyshire," so perhaps he'll look in upon her to-day."

Ben Rymer might have been a black sheep once upon a time, but he had not a bad heart. I began wondering whether Mrs. Todhethley could help them.

"Is Mamie Lee still able to do any sewing?"

"About as much as I could do it. I shall hear what Darbyshire's report is. They would certainly be better off in the workhouse."

"I wish they could be helped!"

"Not much chance of that," said Ben. "She is a sinner, and he is a sinner: Timberdale says so, you know. People in these enlightened days are so very self-righteous!"

"How is Lee a sinner?"

"How! Why, has he not burnt up the public's letters? Mr. Tanerton leads the van in banning him, and Timberdale follows."

I went home, questioning whether our folks would do anything to help the Lees. Nobody called out against ill-doings worse than the Squire; and nobody was more ready than he to lend a helping hand when the ill-doers were fainting for lack of it.

It chanced that, just about the time I was talking to Ben Rymer, Mr. Darbyshire, the doctor at Timberdale, called at Lee's. He was a little, dark man, with an irritable temper and a turned-up nose, but good as gold at heart. Mamie Lee lay back in a chair, her head on a pillow, weak and wan and weary, the tears slowly rolling down her cheeks. Darbyshire was feeling her pulse, and old Mrs. Lee potted about, bringing sticks from the garden to feed the handful of fire. The two children sat on the brick floor.

"If it were not for leaving my poor little one, I should be glad to die, sir," she was saying. "I shall be glad to go: I hope it is not

wrong to say it. She and I have been a dreadful charge upon them here."

Darbyshire looked round the kitchen. It was nearly bare: the things had gone to the pawnbroker's. Then he looked at her.

"There's no need for you to die yet. Don't get that fallacy in your head. You'll come round fast enough with a little care."

"No, sir, I'm afraid not; I think I am past it. It has all come of the trouble, sir; and perhaps when I'm gone, the neighbours will judge me more charitably. I believed with all my heart it was a true marriage—and I hope you'll believe me when I say it, sir; it never came into my mind to imagine otherwise. And I'd have thought the whole world would have deceived me, sooner than James."

"Ah," says Darbyshire, "most girls think that. Well, I'll send you in some physic to soothe the pain in the chest. But what you most want, you see, is kitchen physic."

"Mr. Rymer has been very good in sending me cordials and cough mixture, sir. Mother's cough is bad, and he sent some to her as well."

"Ah; yes. Mrs. Lee, I am telling your daughter that what she most wants is kitchen physic. Good kitchen physic, you understand. You'd be none the worse yourself for some of it."

Dame Lee, coming in just then in her pattens, tried to put her poor bent back as upright as she could, and shook her head before answering.

"Kitchen physic don't come in our way now, Dr. Darbyshire. We just manage not to starve quite, and that's all. Perhaps, sir, things may take a turn. The Lord is over all, and He sees our need."

"He dave me some peppermint d'ops," said the little one, who had been waiting to put in her word. "Andy, too."

"Who did?" asked the doctor.

"Mr. Ymer."

Darbyshire patted the little straw-coloured head, and went out. An additional offence in the eyes of Timberdale was that the child's fair curls were just the pattern of those on the head of James the deceiver.

"Well, have you seen Mamie Lee?" asked Ben Rymer, who chanced to be standing at his shop door after his dinner, when Darbyshire was passing by from paying his round of visits.

"Yes, I have seen her. There's no radical disease."

"Don't you think her uncommonly ill?"

Darbyshire nodded. "But she's not too far gone to be cured. She'd get well fast enough under favourable circumstances."

"Meaning good food?"

"Meaning food and other things. Peace of mind, for instance. She is just fretting herself to death. Shame, remorse, and all that, have got hold of her: besides grieving her heart out after the fellow."

"Her voice is so hollow! Did you notice it?"

"Hollow from weakness only. As to her being too far gone, she is not at present: at least, that's my opinion; but how soon she may become so I can't say. With good kitchen physic, as I've just told them, and ease of mind to help me, I'll answer for it that I'd have her well in a month; but the girl has neither the one nor the other. She seems to look upon coming death in the light of a relief, rather than otherwise; a relief to her own mental trouble, and a relief to the household, in the shape of saving it what she eats and drinks. In such a condition as this, you must be aware that the mind does not help the body by striving for existence, it makes no effort to struggle back to health; and there's where Mamie Lee will fail. Circumstances are killing her, not the disease."

"Did you try her lungs?"

"Partially. I'm sure I am right. The girl will probably die, but she need not of necessity; though I suppose there will be no help for it. Good day."

Mr. Darbyshire walked away in the direction of his house, where his dinner was waiting; and Ben Rymer disappeared within doors, and began to pound some rhubarb (or what looked like it) in a mortar. He was pounding away like mad, with all the strength of his strong hands, when who should come in but Lee. Lee had never been much better than a shadow of late years, but you should have seen him now, with his grey hair straggling about his meek, wan face. You should have seen his clothes, too, and the old shoes out at the toes and sides. Burning people's letters was of course an unpardonable offence, not to be condoned.

"Mamie said, sir, that you were good enough to tell her I was to call in for some of the cough lozenges that did her so much good. But ——"

"Ay," interrupted Ben, getting down a box of the lozenges. "Don't let her spare them. They'll not interfere with anything Mr. Darbyshire may send. I hear he has been."

But that those were not the days when beef tea was sold in tins and gallipots, Ben Rymer might have added some to the lozenges. As he was handing the box to Lee, something in the man's wan and worn and gentle face put him in mind of his late father's, whose heart Mr. Ben had helped to break. A great pity took the chemist.

"You would like to be reinstated in your place, Lee?" he said, suddenly.

Lee could not answer at once, for the pain at his throat and the moisture in his eyes that the notion called up. His voice, when he did speak, was as hollow and mild as Mamie's.

"There's no hope of that, sir. For a week after it was taken from me, I thought of nothing else, night or day, but that Mr. Tanerton might perhaps forgive me and get Salmon to put me on again. But the time for hoping that went by; as you know, Mr. Rymer, they put young Jelf in my place. I shall never forget the blow it was to me when I

heard it. The other morning I saw Jelf crossing that bit of waste ground yonder with my old bag slung on his shoulder, and for a moment I thought the pain would have killed me."

"It is hard lines," said Ben.

"I have striven and struggled all my life long; only myself knows how sorely, save God; and only He can tell, for I am sure I can't, how I have contrived to keep my head any way above water. And now it's under it."

Taking the box, which Ben Rymer handed to him, Lee spoke a word of thanks, and went out. He could not say much; heart and spirit were alike broken. Ben called to his boy to mind the shop, and went over to Salmon's. That self-sufficient man and prosperous tradesman was sitting down at his desk in the shop corner, complacently digesting his dinner—which had been a good one, to judge by his red face.

"Can't you manage to do something for Lee?" began Ben, after looking to see that they were alone. "He is at a rare low ebb."

"Do something for Lee?" repeated Salmon. "What could I do for him?"

"Put him on his place again."

"I daresay!" Salmon laughed, and then demanded whether Ben was a fool.

"You might do it if you would," said Ben. "As to Lee, he won't last long if things continue to be as they are. Better give him a chance to live a little longer."

"Now what do you mean?" demanded Salmon. "Why don't you ask me to put a weathercock on yonder malt-house of Pashley's? Jelf has got Lee's place, and you know it."

"But Jelf does not intend to keep it."

"Who says he does not?"

"He does. He told me yesterday that he was sick and tired of the tramping, and meant to resign. He only took it as a temporary convenience, while he waited for a clerkship he was trying for at a brewery at Worcester. And he is to get that with the new year."

"Then what does Jelf mean by talking about it to others before he has spoken to me?" cried Salmon, going into a temper. "He thought to leave me and the letters at a pinch, I suppose! I'll teach him better."

"You may teach him anything you like, if you'll put Lee on again. I'll go bail that he won't get smoking again on his rounds. I think it is just a toss-up of life or death to him. Come! do a good turn for once, Salmon."

Salmon paused. He was not bad-hearted, only self-important.

"What would Mr. Tanerton say to it?"

Ben did not answer. He knew that there, after Salmon himself, was where the difficulty would lie.

"All that you have been urging goes for nonsense, Rymer. Un-

less the rector came to me and said, 'You may put old Lee on again,' I should not, and could not, attempt to stir in the matter; and you must know that as well as I do."

"Can't somebody see Tanerton, and talk to him? One would think that the sight of Lee's face would be enough to soften him, without anything else."

"I don't know who'd like to do it," returned Salmon. And there the conference ended, for the apprentice came in from his dinner.

Very much to our surprise, Mr. Ben Rymer walked in that same evening to Crabb Cot, and was admitted to the Squire. In spite of Mr. Ben's former ill-doings, which we had got to know of, the Squire treated Ben civilly, in remembrance of his grandfather, the clergyman. Ben's errand was to ask the Squire to intercede for Lee with Herbert Tanerton. And the Pater, after talking largely about the iniquity of Lee, as connected with burnt letters, came round to Ben's way of thinking, and agreed to go to the rectory.

"Herbert Tanerton's harder than nails, and you'll do no good," remarked Tod, watching us away on the following morning; for the Pater took me with him to break the loneliness of the walk. "He'll turn as cold to you as a stone the moment you bring up the subject, sir. Tell me I'm a story-teller when you come back if he does not, Johnny."

We took the way of the Ravine. It was a searching day; the wintry wind keen and "unkind as man's ingratitude." Before us, toiling up the descent to the ravine at the other end, and coming to a halt at the stile to pant and cough, went a woe-begone figure, thinly clad, which turned out to be Lee himself. He had a small bundle of loose sticks in his hand, which he had come to pick up. The Squire was preparing a kind of blowing-up greeting for him, touching lighted matches and carelessness, but the sight of the mild, starved, grey face disarmed him; he thought instead of the days when Lee had been a prosperous farmer, and his tone changed to one of pity.

"Hard times, I'm afraid, Lee."

"Yes, sir, very hard. I have known hard times before, but I never thought to see any so cruel as these. There's one comfort, sir: when things come to this low ebb, life can't last long."

"Stuff," said the Squire. "For all you know, you may be back in your old place soon: and—and Mrs. Todhetley will find some sewing when Mamie's well enough to do it."

A faint light, the dawn-ray of hope, shone in Lee's eyes. "Oh, sir, if it could be!—and I heard a whisper to-day that young Jelf refuses to keep the post. If it had been anybody's letter but Mr. Tanerton's, perhaps—but he does not forgive."

"I'm on my way: now to ask him to," cried the Pater, unable to keep in the news. "Cheer up, Lee—of course you'd pass your word not to go burning letters again."

"I'd not expose myself to the danger, sir. Once I got my old

place back, I would never take out a pipe with me on my rounds ; never, as long as I lived."

Leaving him with his new hope and the bundle of firewood, we trudged on to the rectory. Herbert and Grace were both at home, and glad to see us.

But the interview ended in smoke. Tod had foreseen the result exactly: the rector was harder than nails. He talked of "example" and "Christian duty;" and refused point-blank to allow Lee to be reinstated. The Squire gave him a few sharp words, and flung out of the house in a passion.

"A pretty Christian *he* is, Johnny! He was cold and hard as a boy. I once told him so before his step-father, poor Jacob Lewis: but he is colder and harder now."

At the turning of the road by Timberdale Court we came upon Lee. After taking his faggots home, he waited about to see us and hear the news. The Pater's face, red and angry, told him the truth.

"There's no hope for me, sir, I fear?"

"Not a bit of it," growled the Squire. "Mr. Tanerton won't listen to reason. Perhaps we can find some other light post for you, my poor fellow, when the winter shall have turned. You had better get in-doors out of this biting cold; and here's a couple of shillings."

So hope went clean out of Andrew Lee.

III.

Christmas Day and jolly weather. Snow on the ground to one's heart's content. Holly and ivy on the walls in-doors, and great fires blazing on the hearths; turkeys, and plum-puddings, and oranges, and fun. *That* was our lucky state at Crabb Cot and at Timberdale generally, but not at Andrew Lee's.

The sweet bells were chiming people out of church, as was the custom at Timberdale on high festivals. Poor Lee sat listening to them, his hand held up to his aching head. There had been no church for him: he had neither clothes to go in nor face to sit through the service. Mamie, wrapped in an old bed-quilt, lay back on the pillow by the fire. The coal merchant, opening his heart, had sent a sack each of best Staffordshire coal to ten poor families, and Lee's was one. Except the Squire's two shillings he had had no money given to him. A loaf of bread was in the cupboard; and a saucepan of broth, made of carrots and turnips out of the garden, simmered on the trivet; and that would be their Christmas dinner.

Uncommonly low was Mamie to-day. The longer she endured this famished state of affairs the weaker she got; it stands to reason. She felt that a few days, perhaps hours, would finish her up. The little ones were up-stairs with their grandmother, so that she had an interval of rest; and she lay back, her breath short and her chest aching as she thought of the past.

Of the time when James West, the handsome young man in his gay regimentals, came wooing her, as the soldier did the miller's daughter. In those happy days, when her heart was light and her song blithe as a bird's in May, that used to be one of her songs, "The Banks of Allan Water." Her dream had come to the same ending as the one told of in the ballad, and here she lay, deserted and dying. Timberdale was in the habit of prosaically telling her that she had "brought her pigs to a fine market." Of the market there could be no question; but when Mamie looked into the past she saw more of romance than pigs. The breaking out of the church bells forced a rush of tears to her heart and eyes. She tried to battle with the feeling, then turned and put her cheek against her father's shoulder.

"Forgive me, father!" she besought him, in a sobbing whisper. "I don't think it will be long now; I want you to say you forgive me before I go. If—if you can."

And the words finished up for Lee what the bells had only partly done. He broke down, and sobbed with his daughter.

"I've never thought there was need of it, or to say it, child; and if there had been — Christ forgave all. 'Peace on earth and goodwill to men.' The bells are ringing it out now. He will soon take us to Him, Mamie, my forlorn one: forgiven; yes, forgiven; and in His beautiful world there is neither hunger, nor disgrace, nor pain. You are dying of that cold you caught in the autumn, and I shan't be long behind you. There's no longer any place for me here."

"Not of the cold, father; I am not dying of that, but of a broken heart."

Lee sobbed. He did not answer.

"And I should like to leave my forgiveness to James, should he ever come back here," she whispered: "and—and my love. Please tell him that I'd have got well if I could, if only for the chance of seeing him once again in this world; and tell him that I have thought all along there must be some mistake; that he did not mean deliberately to harm me. I think so still, father. And if he should notice little Mima, please tell him —"

A paroxysm of coughing interrupted the rest. Mrs. Lee came down stairs with the children, asking if it was not time for dinner.

"The little ones are crying out for it, Mamie, and I'm sure the rest of us are hungry enough."

So they bestirred themselves to take up the broth, and to take seats round the table. All but Mamie, who did not leave her pillow. Very watery broth, the carrots and turnips swimming in it.

"Say grace, Andy," cried his grandmother. For they kept up proper manners at Lee's, in spite of the short commons.

"For what we are going to receive," began Andy: and then he pulled himself up, and looked round.

Bursting in at the door, a laugh upon his face and a white basin in

his hands, came Mr. Ben Rymer. The basin was three parts filled with delicious slices of hot roast beef and gravy.

"I thought you might like to eat a bit, as it's Christmas Day," said Ben. "And here's an orange or two for you youngsters."

Putting the oranges out of his pocket, and not waiting to be thanked, Ben went off again. But he did not tell them what he was laughing at, or the trick he had played his mother—in slicing away at the round of beef, and rifling the dish of oranges; while her back was turned, looking after the servant's doings in the kitchen, and the turning-out of the pudding. For Mrs. Rymer followed Timberdale in taking an exaggerated view of Lee's sins, and declined to help him.

Their faces had hardly done shining with the unusual luxury of the beef, when I dropped in. We had gone that day to church at Timberdale; after the service, the Squire left the others to walk on, and, taking me with him, called at the rectory to tackle Herbert Tanerton again. He did not hold out. How could he, with those bells, enjoining good will, ringing in his ears?—the bells of his own church. But he had meant to come round of his own accord.

"I'll see Salmon about it to-morrow," said he. "I did say just a word to him, yesterday. As you go home, Johnny may look in at Lee's and tell him so."

"And Johnny, if you don't mind carrying it, I'll send a drop of beef-tea to Mamie," whispered Grace, hiding her wet eyelashes.

So, when it was getting towards dusk, for the Squire stayed, talking of this and that, there I was, with the bottle of beef-tea, telling Lee the good news that his place would be restored to him with the new year, and hearing about Ben Rymer's basin of meat. The tears rolled down old Lee's haggard cheeks.

"And I had been fearing that God had abandoned me!" he cried, full of remorse for the doubt. "Mamie, perhaps you can struggle on a bit longer now."

But the greatest event of all was to come. While I stood there, somebody opened the door, and looked in. A tall, fine, handsome soldier: and I did not at the moment notice that he had a wooden leg from the knee downwards. Ben's basin of beef had been a surprise, but it was nothing to this. Taking a glance round the room, it rested on Mamie, and he went up to her, the smile on his open face changing to concern.

"My dear lassie, what's amiss?"

"James!" she faintly screamed; "it's James!" and burst into a fit of sobs on his breast. And next the company was augmented by Salmon and Ben Rymer, who had seen James West go by, and came after him to know what it meant, and to blow him up for his delinquencies.

"Mamie not married!" laughed James. "Timberdale has been saying that? Why, what extraordinary people you must be! We were married at Bristol—and I've got the certificate in my knapsack

at Spicer's : I've always kept it. You can paste it up on the church door if you like. Not married ! Mamie would not else have gone with me ; neither should I have taken her."

"But," said poor Lee, thinking that heaven must have opened right over his head, that afternoon, to shower down gifts ; "why did you not marry her here openly?"

"Because I could not get leave to marry openly. We soldiers cannot marry at will, you know, Mr. Lee. I ought not to have done it ; that's a fact ; but I did not care to leave Mamie, I liked her too well ; and I was punished afterwards by not being allowed to take her to India."

"You never wrote, James," whispered Mamie.

"Yes, I did, dear ; I wrote twice to Ireland, not knowing you had left it. That was at first, just after we landed. Soon we had a skirmish with the natives out there, and I got shot in the leg and otherwise wounded ; and for a long time I lay between life and death, only partly conscious ; and now I am discharged with a pension and a wooden leg."

"Then you can't go for a soldier again !" cried Salmon.

"Not I. I shall settle at Timberdale, I think, if I can meet with a pretty little place to suit me. I found my poor mother dead when I came home, and what was hers is now mine. And it will be a comfortable living for us, Mamie, of itself : besides a few spare hundred pounds to the good, some of which you shall be heartily welcome to, Mr. Lee, for you look as if you wanted it. And the first thing I shall do, Mamie my dear, will be to nurse you back to health. Bless my heart ! Not married ! I wish I had the handling of him that first set that idea afloat !"

"You'll get well now, Mamie," I whispered to her. For she was looking better already.

"Oh, Master Johnny, perhaps I shall ! How good God is to us ! And James—James, this is the little one. I named her after you : Jemima."

"Peace on earth, and good-will to men !" cried old Lee, in his thankfulness. "The bells said it to-day."

And as I made off at last to catch up the Squire, the little Mima was being smothered with kisses in her father's arms.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men !" To every one of us, my friends, are the bells saying it, this later Christmas, 1877.

JOHNNY LUDLOW.

THROUGH HOLLAND.

IT now becomes necessary to return to the period of my first visit to Holland. The two preceding papers have been interludes in the narrative. I have endeavoured as far as possible to keep each thread distinct, in order to avoid confusing the mind of the reader. The second visit took place in the month of June of this present year: the first in the months of August and September, 1876. To that time we must now go back.

It may be remembered that I left Arnhem on the Tuesday morning for Amsterdam. There I found A. busy with his brush and pencil, putting in finishing touches and last strokes to sundry sketches which ought to raise him to the dignity of P.R.A. He was ready for a final exit from the capital, yet put up his traps with a sigh and a longing for a six months' work amongst the art treasures and antiquities around him.

The following day we started for Rotterdam, stopping an hour on the road at Gouda. Everyone visiting Holland should see this little place; not so much for itself, as for the twenty-eight windows of the great church. Nowhere else can be found such an assemblage of old glass. You examine window after window, wondering at the beauty, and surprised that the town has not long since been deprived of its treasures.

Various traditions exist as to the painters of these works of art. One of them says that they were painted by two Englishmen, who, as soon as they were finished, were deprived of their eyesight, in order that they should do no more. The windows date back to the sixteenth century, and are equally beautiful, in design, tone, and colouring. Such windows are not often seen, yet they are inferior in breadth and grandeur to the three windows in the old church of Amsterdam. No other church in Holland possesses anything to approach the latter.

Gouda itself is a quaint, primitive place, with few attractions for the visitor. It is chiefly noted now for its manufactories of clay pipes, which supply the Dutch with the means of smoking the fragrant weed. Very proud and fond of their clays they are. They smoke them brown and black, then treasure them up, stack them and rack them, row after row. Does a friend call in, who has left his smoking gear behind him, one of these brown, old veterans is immediately produced and lent as a treat and an honour. Then they puff away at each other, and gradually get into thick clouds; and talk of the value of money and the state of the market; passing on to the blue eyes of Gretchen, or the merits, temper, and disposition of their respective vrouwen. For the Dutch are matter-of-fact in their loves, and their courtships, and their home interiors.

We had left Rotterdam with a moderate amount of luggage. We returned to it overwhelmed with the weight and responsibility of our treasures. Sundry packing cases containing old clocks and pictures; brown paper parcels that refused to fit in anywhere, and had to be carried, and were constantly getting lost; large hampers of old Worcester, old Delft, old Wedgwood. Spanish enamels quaint and curious; old pencilled jars, antique watches, and graven glass. Many things that some people would have thought impossibly ugly, but we



OLD HOUSE, HAARLEM.

had secured as rarities. On account of these treasures, most of which were insecurely packed, we had decided to return to London as we had come, by the long route; avoiding all changes and railways, and the dangers they too often entail to objects, as Mrs. Malaprop would say, of "bigotry and virtue."

Arrived at the Rotterdam station, we freighted a cart and walked down the quays to the boat in procession. This seemed the safer plan, but proved the contrary. Half way over the Boomptjies, the man in charge of the truck came into violent contact with one of the large cameons dashing along at its usual rate of rapidity and

carelessness. This did some damage to our possessions, yet less than might have been expected. It was, however, annoying, for the reason that it might so easily have been avoided; and because, until we reached home we could not tell how far the number of pieces had multiplied though not improved. The boat was reached without further disaster.

Bag and baggage in safe quarters, we had some hours to devote to Rotterdam; to looking up and refreshing our memories with all the



OLD CHURCH, AMSTERDAM.

old points by which our admiration had been excited on first landing in Holland. In time we found our way to the excellent table d'hôte at the Hôtel des Bains: and encountered what seemed a slightly extortionate charge. Desirous, according to civilised customs, of washing our hands before dinner, and occupying the room for about the space of one minute and a half, it was charged a gulden in the bill—*i.e.* 8*d.* Considering that the dinner and the wine amounted to a sum not very far short of a pound, the item appeared more than unreasonable. It is in such small matters that innkeepers make mistakes and retard the success of their houses. Going back to wash our hands when dinner was over, soap and towels had been removed from the room, and a second demand would doubtless have exacted another gulden. We dispensed with the luxury. It is not the loss of

the money in these cases that calls forth a certain amount of irate indignation : but what appears as the injustice of the charge : applying the screw where it should be relaxed.

That evening, in the twilight, I wandered on to the new bridge in course of construction, and caught the view of Rotterdam that memory has retained most vividly. The bridge was not open to the public, and only by permission I mounted the long flight of steps to its heights. A., afraid of slipping through the beams and plunging into a cold bath against his inclination, thought discretion the better part of valour and remained below. He lost much.

The bridge was at a great elevation. It seemed to land me above the roofs of the houses and the masts of the vessels. The water was far below. It almost appeared that a fall would ensure loss of consciousness before the fatal plunge. The sun had sunk in the west, and left behind a few flakes of red and gold, now fast fading. The tints of evening were vanishing. Above the water, high in the dark blue, the large silver crescent of the moon hung suspended in the clear atmosphere. The sky was cloudless beyond the few tinted snowflakes in the dying sunglow. A few evening stars shone out clear and pale, each moment growing less faint. But nothing could rival in exquisite and quiet beauty that silver crescent. Her rays were cast upon the shimmering water, here and there disturbed by a solitary boatman punting across the stream. So far above the town, and at this hour, absolute silence reigned. From the immense mass of shipping no sound ascended. The workmen had all gone home. I was alone upon the gigantic structure, and sat there long after darkness had fallen. It was difficult to quit the magic scene. The great height seemed to give one a sense of power and command over the world. I could have persuaded myself that I was a magician exercising a spell upon the town ; which might arise or vanish, pass into activity or stagnation, with the wave of a wand. The moon silvered the houses, and brought them into outline ; cast lights and shadows, and threw into relief the towers and steeples and octagon domes that here and there reared their frowning heads in grim, stern silence. But her magic was most seen upon the water, where she cast forth her jewels in countless profusion : a pathway made by no mortal hand. When darkness had quite set in, and the air from this elevated point was growing chilly, with caution and some little difficulty I returned to earth. I felt that I had been out of the world for a short spell : above the ordinary level of mankind and the commonplace. It is humiliating to have to descend to accustomed tone and habits after one of these exalted flights. But it is impossible always to be up in the clouds. There must be a return to sober duties and active life. We cannot always look down upon the world from a height. Romance and reality may both have a share in life, they never go hand in hand ; the one is the rule, the other the exception. No doubt well for us. Too much romance might enervate the mind,

and unfit it for the duties of life ; the rubs, the disappointments, the circumstances that will not be controlled ; the hard battles, the many tumbles that come to most of us once and again. " Man never is, but always to be blessed."

But if there can be little of the commonplace anywhere on the ordinary level of this world of ours, it surely was in Rotterdam to-night. The houses, their quaint outlines softened and subdued by the darkness, looked as if they belonged to an age associated in our minds with little of the prosaic tameness of detail of this latter part of the nineteenth century. Yet let us turn to the best side of the picture. If we have lost in some ways, we have no doubt gained in others. Not one of the least of these is our command over space and the elements. This running to and fro at breathless speed, so that in a short time we may see all the kingdoms of the world ; compare one with another ; subdue and civilise the most distant ; bring all within one overshadowing influence. We have compassed the world with an iron girdle, and send our thoughts from pole to pole almost with the speed at which light travels. The ancients read the stars and foretold the return of comets ; we forecast the fall of meteors and the approach of storms : thus saving life, even though it belong to these nineteenth century days. So they have it not all in their favour those giants of the middle ages. Future generations are not very probably destined to the glories and achievements of our own day, which have revolutionised nations and changed the face of the earth beyond what seems the possibility of an equal extent of progress and discovery in the ages that are yet to come. The mind of man is fathomable ; his genius bounded ; his powers, like the sea, have their limits. So far shalt thou go. It seems not too much to say we have almost reached those limits. We have command over earth and sea ; we shall never have it over the air : people may try to make to themselves wings ; they never will. It was not meant to be. A celebrated physician lately said he had prosecuted his researches into science to such a point that a very little more and he would render the body immortal and conquer death. Thinks he to succeed ? We could balance the world had we but a resting place for the sole of the foot. So when we come to think of it : of the round world and they that dwell therein : of Him who guides the stars, and rules the heavens, and holds the winds in the hollow of His hands : who permits man now and again to make small discoveries and inventions, gigantic to his understanding, but that after all cannot change one law of nature, or turn the current of the softest wind that blows : we have to come back, whether we will or not, to the knowledge of our own weakness. The mightiest amongst us are but children of a larger growth.

We went on board that night, and steamed away in the dark hours of the morning, not without sorrow and regret at leaving the quaint little kingdom of Holland. It had been a pleasant and profitable

time : an acquaintance with the fine arts and many antiquarian gems and relics : a study of character interesting and unusual : types not always seen : costumes and ornaments curious and rare. There had been no great beauty of landscape. But such as it was it possessed an individuality that marked it for its own. Not interesting perhaps to live amongst ; but of sufficient charm to render a short visit the reverse of tedious. In the quaint architecture of its towns, Holland has it all her own way. Here she holds the palm and keeps it. Hitherto it has not been the fashion to visit Holland ; as I have said ; but I believe it will become so. Especially in these days, when Society has taken a rage for everything of a bygone date. When dining-rooms are furnished without carpets ; and revel in antique sideboards, and chairs with stiff, charming outlines suggestive of mediæval times and primitive customs, but oh ! how hard and cramped to sit in for three hours at a stretch. When Society decorates its tables no longer with sweet scented roses and graceful fuchsias and regal camellias, and delicate azaleas, and choicest exotics of skill and cultivation ; but with cowslips and daisies, blue corn-flowers and the artless but not elegant poppy ; when ladies, instead of revelling in bouquets of rare blossoms, grace brilliant assemblies with huge bunches of buttercups. All this is charmingly simple, but the play, to be perfect, ought to be carried out in all the details of life. Otherwise it becomes incongruous ; somewhat laughable.

But a love for the antique ; bringing the forms without the ceremonies (if the reader will pardon a very bad pun) of a past century unto the present ; is certainly on the increase. It is a fashion perhaps really destined to take root and become a habit. And if this be so, Holland also will take her place. Many a lesson may here be learned ; many a useful idea carried away. But should the tide of travellers ever thoroughly set in Holland-wards, let the Dutch take warning. Let them be content with moderate gains. Let them eschew extortion and keep in the honest paths of medium profits, if they can. Already the hotels are as dear and not as comfortable as those of other and more popular countries. Already they charge beyond the full value of their wares. And should this increase they will rue their error. Englishmen and Americans, say they, will pay anything demanded of them. They will learn, perhaps too late, that an Englishman as much as anyone likes his *quid pro quo* for his money. We say nothing of the others. And let them remember that Holland after all has its drawbacks. It does not appeal to everyone's tastes and sympathies. It has no beauty of scenery, such as is found in greater or less degree in all other countries. It has its canals and terrible odours ; its clouds and mists and variations of climate ; its bad coffee—and its raw herrings.

But as yet there is little to complain of. There is an unusual amount of simplicity amongst them. You enter many a shop and feel that you may safely trust that face behind the counter. There

is honesty in its every line ; good faith in the steadfast look of those eyes. Let them keep all this, and they will do well. And how



AMSTERDAM.

charming and refreshing the simple life of the higher classes. How many a lesson they read their foreign neighbours. Their bouquets consist not of cowslips and buttercups—as far as I know. I fancy

they would as soon think of mint and rue : but they carry out the simple element into their every-day life instead. They dwell together in sociable freedom, with all its attendant pleasures and advantages. They are characterized by a quiet self-respect that is quite sufficient to give them the respect of the world they live in and the world at large. I confess that what I have seen of the inner life of the Dutch I like. My experience has been short and limited ; but not limited for the extent of the time so devoted. There is much to admire in them ; much that is worthy of praise and imitation. In my second sojourn amongst them I gained a somewhat more extensive knowledge of them than in my first : and it but increased my regard and good opinion. I saw nothing that did not make me wish for a more intimate acquaintance : a deeper and more extended knowledge of people and character. Should that time ever come I shall probably see in them at once more and less than I do at this moment. I shall no doubt find that they have at bottom many of the habits and thoughts of other nations ; are often actuated by similar influences ; possess alike that one touch of nature that makes the whole world kin : only separated by the confusion of tongues and the differences of habits and customs. But as the matter now stands I record my liking and esteem for the Dutch, which with time and opportunity might very well go on to affection.

In these pages I have entered into no abstruse questions. My attention was rather given to observing the country and the people : and I have confined myself chiefly to what I saw and felt. I have endeavoured to record conscientious and unexaggerated impressions : from which alone I have written. I took no notes whatever during my stay in the country. But the accuracy of the statements, as far as they go, may be trusted. Where I have not been quite sure of a fact, it has been withheld. It remains but to crave the indulgence of the reader for many shortcomings of which the writer is but too painfully conscious : and to beg of him to exercise that leniency of spirit it is the high privilege of those to minister who sit in judgment.

We steamed away from Rotterdam in the small hours of the morning. Darkness was still upon the face of the earth. But the hours crept on, and the dawn broke, the sun rose, and with it a new day. We left the Maas and the land, and gradually lost the last faint view of Holland. We were out on the broad sea : a sea calm and placid as we had found in coming. The sun, who had hidden his face so often during the past month, now poured his hot beams upon the decks with a power that seemed determined to make up for many wet days. The whole passage was cloudless. The day drew to a close ; the sun went down, flooding sky and sea in golden light. The colours chased each other, broad, brilliant, and gorgeous. Then twilight crept over the face of the waters, a soft wind sprang up, and night gradually closed in. Out came the stars, and the silver crescent of the moon, which I had revelled in the previous

night. The scene was changed. The houses of Rotterdam, with their quaint outlines, were no more. Life and energy could only be imagined. No lights glimmering from numberless streets. No stream of people, each occupied with his own work and way ; each contributing his link to the great chain that binds the world together and bids it speed. No sounds of revelry on the one hand, or of sorrow and sighing on the other. All this existed, but not at sea. These things do not reach us out on the broad ocean. Many of us have experienced being away from land for a few weeks, or, it may be, months, without the possibility of learning anything of what is passing on shore. A perfect and deathlike separation from the world and mankind. All things standing still with us, whilst perhaps on land wars have broken out, and revolutions have shaken the fate of an empire to its centre ; and the great and crowned of the land may have passed from time into eternity ; and the cry has gone through the nation "*Le roi est mort, vive le roi !*" whilst we at sea have been performing our daily round of narrowed duties and pleasure calmly and quietly as if chances and changes were not, and how we have landed with a feeling almost as of having risen from the dead. We many of us know all this : and yet more. A vacant chair that was filled when we started in a household near and dear to us : a matter of greater self interest when all is done than the perils of an empire or the fate of a battle.

Nothing of this sort was likely to occur in our short crossing from Rotterdam to London. We had left the English coast in darkness, and watched the North Foreland light its beacon. In like manner we returned. Too dark to see the coast, the light was there bright and glowing. So we entered the river, and passed the bell buoy, with its weary clang : traced now one light ship, now another. By eleven o'clock we had got far down. I turned in for a rest : A. remained on deck. About midnight I was aroused from a sleep, which on board ship is never quite one thing or the other, by a jerk and a slight crash, and went on deck to discover the cause. In some way we had managed to carry away the mast of a barge, without sinking the craft. Collision No. 1 at Rotterdam. No. 2 in the Thames. Were we going in for No. 3 ? The slight catastrophe had banished sleep, and I now took my turn on deck. A., on the contrary, went down. The hours passed on until about two o'clock, and we anchored at a wharf to land the cattle. We had a large stock on board ; but the animals, in the hold during the voyage, had not been inconvenient to the passengers. Now commenced the fun of the journey : and only two of us amongst the passengers profited by the occasion.

The scene was strange and weird. The night was yet perfectly dark. The faces of the drovers on the wharf were thrown out into intense relief by the flaring torches they carried. Their coarse faces and wide grinning mouths inspired a feeling of horror and repulsion.

They looked impish, almost satanic. No doubt they appeared worse than they were. The gangways were put down, the hold was thrown open, and they commenced to get up the cattle. These consisted of sheep and oxen: and, like the Irishwoman's famous pig, they invariably go the opposite way they are driven. They were no exception in this instance. The scene was ludicrous and remarkable. One animal after another, as if it knew its fate in store, would ont land. The men pulled, and pushed, and thrust at them with sticks; shouted and yelled; dogs barked and jumped, and careered wildly about; everything and everyone was in a state of excited



AMSTERDAM.

uproar. Occasionally, a bullock or young calt safely landed on deck, would turn tail and fairly leap over all down into the lowest depth of the hold: landing at the bottom still and motionless as a dead thing. Not dead, however, or even hurt. For the dog, and the man, and the stick, the barking and yelling, would soon get it up again and send it once more on its journey. So things went on until finally every animal was landed. Save one sheep, declared the tally keeper. The hold was searched, and the deck; and still the black sheep was missing and was never found. Whether he jumped overboard; whether he was eaten up during the voyage by the others; whether he evaporated into thin air; whether he was never put on board at all, which is possible; or whether he had slipped on shore unseen by the tallyman, which was more probable: was never

known to the two passengers who assisted as spectators at a ceremony, the charms of which were to a great extent those of night and novelty.

And now we come to the last and final stage.

It was past four o'clock before we again started up the river. At half-past four the dawn had broken. The feeling of chilliness and fatigue that takes possession of us at this hour had seized upon me. I turned in. A. at the same moment turned out. He had slept since midnight and was ready for anything. He went upon deck. In a few moments I had lost all sense of outward things. At five o'clock I was again awakened by a crashing in front of me ; the sense of a collision. I was nearly jerked out of my berth ; a custom-house



ROTTERDAM.

officer in the next cabin was quite thrown out of his. By this time I had got used to the feeling and the sound. Nevertheless, I got up and went on deck. As I opened my door, the officer opened his, looking startled and anxious. Above I found things in a state of pent up excitement ; that hushed silence which often follows escape from a great peril. The first face I saw was A.'s, pale as death. Passing was a huge iron steamer, big enough to have swallowed us. Men and officers on our decks were little if any less white than A. As soon as they were a little composed they told us the meaning of it all. We were turning a bend in the river—I think Blackwall. As we turned upwards, this huge steamer was turning downwards on her wrong side, right upon us. It seemed, as they said, that no earthly power could save the ship. Go she must : be split in two and run down by the advancing steamer. The officers rushed forward in the hope

of escaping the falling masts. Of the two men at the wheel, one left it and threw himself flat upon the deck. Only the other man at the wheel and the captain kept their posts. Each ship saw the danger. Orders were given : on went the vessels. It seemed, I have said, that no earthly power could save us : and, but that the large steamer was very lightly loaded, the captain declared that nothing could or would have saved us. But just as she ran into us she swung slightly, grazed the ship from the point she touched and passed off. The point she touched was damaged, the rails were carried away and we suffered no further harm.

Had the vessel cut us asunder, though every other man on board had been saved, I could not have escaped. She struck immediately upon my berth. Thus of all on board I had the most cause to be thankful for this escape from so great a danger. It was impossible to listen to the narrative, and watch the pale, awe-stricken faces of men and officers, evidence of the real peril we had sustained, without being impressed in the highest degree, and I hope with the best sense of gratitude for the mercy vouchsafed.

The following Sunday was the first day of the month. I chanced to be at the Temple Church. In that most perfect of all services, the pure voices of the boys blended as usual in perfect harmony with the older voices of the lay clerks. The exquisite tones of the ancient organ guided them, controlled by one who has no superior in his office.

And here, reader, I must again crave thy indulgence, if I conclude with words that are best heard in the mouth of a preacher, or belong to works that aim at higher things than instruction or amusement. But the words so soon after the incident narrated, were so applicable, so real, that they came almost with the force of a message : that I felt, should I write at all about Holland—which I anticipated not to do—they could only form the text or conclusion of my subject.

It was the last verse of the fourth Psalm. The pure voices of the boys were rising and falling to an exquisite chant. My mind had wandered at the moment to that scene on board ship in the early morning, so recent, and so vivid, its full impression more than ever upon me in this my first attendance at church after my return home. When suddenly, with a thrill of emotion I can never forget, the following words went floating amidst the beautiful arches of the roof and the fluted pillars :

"I will lay me down in peace and take my rest, for it is Thou, Lord, only, that makest me dwell in safety."

CHARLES W. WOOD.

PASSING.

WE are not parted yet, but death dews rise
 And pearl your hueless temples and wan brow,
 And o'er the hazel lustre of your eyes
 A change has come—a gleam of glad surprise—
 By this, I feel your life is ebbing now,
 Passing, though not divided from me yet,
 Half of my heart! twin spirit of my soul!
 My lids are weary; why are they not wet?
 Joy so divine is on your forehead set,
 It forces back hot tears that else would roll.

By the dim shrouded night-lamp near your bed,
 Weird shadows flicker up and down the room;
 And from the half-burnt pine-log sparks of red
 Glimmer and dance, then sink to ashes dead,
 Like living creatures fading into gloom.
 I hear the blast sweep down the garden lawn,
 The barn-owl's pinion beats against the panes;
 A little while, and one more day will dawn,
 But you, sweet love! are fainter than a fawn
 Chased by the hunters till its young life wanes.

Dying, you gaze on death without a fear;
 I see your soul through those dark irids burn
 In a bright flame serenely pure and clear,
 Leaping to leave its shrine of marble here,
 White, cold, and graceful as a Parian urn.
 My lovelight still! how glorious afar,
 Soaring above the torches of the skies,
 To golden gates that blessed saints unbar,
 Before God's City where His angels are;—
 Grief must fall dead when one like you, love, dies!

JANE DIXON.

SEEING A GHOST.

DID I ever see a ghost? Well, I can't say, young ladies, that I ever fairly saw one meself; but I was knowing to a ghost that Norah saw, my sister's daughter. Will I tell ye about it? But, if I take up the morning with story-telling, how will my mince-meat get done? Help me, ye say? Well, now as you be in my kitchen, you two young ladies, if ye will each of you take a knife in your hand, and fall to at paling these apples, I'll not say no. A hand or two at the paring of the apples will be a great help to me entirely. Sure I think yer father and mother as good as gold, and I'm doting on ye all, for it's the good place I have here; and ye're a fine, growing family, and noble aitters, which keeps me tight to my cooking. But the story, ye say. Well, I'll sit down here, by yer leave, young ladies, and pick the currants afore I set on to my chopping. There: and now ye shall hear about the ghost poor Norah saw.

My sister Kitty was the oldest of us all; and a mighty gintale, edicated woman she was, for she was born and reared before my father came to his losses with the crops, and she took the shine off the whole of us. Kitty married a man by the name of Terrance Cassidy, a joiner to trade, but not strong; and he died five years after, leaving her with two children, Susan and Norah. Both were fair-looking girls enough: but it's Norah that was the beauty: a gentle, nice-looking child, she was, with a skin like the lilies.

My sister Kitty had but little to do with, but she was saving, and struggled along wonderfully. She had a little place rent free, for it was hers, and she took to teaching the farmers' childer round, and one would cut her turf for her and another would haul it home. Some would send potaties and meal, and some butter and eggs, in payment for the teaching: and what with one thing and another she managed to rear the childer well, though it was little my poor father could spare her, for we were a large family.

Well, as I'm telling ye, young ladies, Norah turned out to be a beauty, fair and pleasant to look upon. Susey was a good-looking girl, but nothing to compare with her. Now, ye may be thinking to look at me, that it's not truth I'm telling, seeing she was my own niece, when I say she was such a wonder. I never was to call handsome meself, but I've come through a dale, and, being light complected, I freckled easy: so with one thing and another, my own mother wouldn't know me the day. But Norah was not my sort: she had the shape and make and manners of a lady; and scarcely a boy in the parish but was mad in love with her. There were two in particular, above all the rest. One was a lad of the name of Tim Connor, whose father had a bit of a farm that Tim and himself

managed. But he was a wild sprig of a boy, that would work one day and frolic the next; and my sister Kitty gave him the cold shoulder. The other was Dan O'Brien, an orphan, who had been reared well: a steady young chap, that liked to read books with Norah, and had a good word from everybody. He went to an old soldier that had recaved a terrible grand edication in his youth, and he taught him to keep accounts, and other lashings of learning that I know nothing about. Well, ye see, being so steady and striving so hard after the larning, and keeping himself neat and genteel, my sister Kitty thought fine things of him, and always said there was more in his head than the world knew of.

Norah had a way with her of always being smiling and agreeable, for she had the sweet temper; but she was a shy maiden, and it was hard to make out who she favoured. The two young men wasted no love on one another, as you may be sure, for each was jealous of the other, especially Tim Connor, who knew he was not as good as Dan.

One Halloween night there was a gathering of us all at my sister Kitty's, and we sat round the fire trying our luck with burning nuts, naming apple-pips, and such like, and having great sport entirely.

"I wonder where is Dan O'Brien," said Kitty, suddenly. "Have any of you seen him the night, boys?"

"I have," says Larry Doolan. "He was up at our house with his uncle when I came out. Peter O'Brien has come back from America, and he says it's a fine place entirely, where you have to search for trouble if you want it, and luck looks for you."

"Glory now," says Kitty, "if old Peter O'Brien is in Ireland? I hope he'll come over the length of this, for it's myself will be glad to see him."

Well, the words were but out of her mouth when the door opened and in he walked, Dan behind him. Kitty rose up, and a warm welcome she gave the two.

"Susey, stir up the fire," says she, "and, Norah, draw up a chair for Mr. O'Brien. I'm glad you've come over, Dan, and I'm pleased to see your uncle. Many's the time I've thought of you, Peter, and wondered what had become of ye, away in that hathenish place."

Well, the discourse went on betwixt them, as it does between two friends long separated, but we took to our games again. And I ought to be telling ye, perhaps, that my sister Kitty was years and years older than me, so that I was like a girl compared to her. Larry Doolan begins; he was always a talker:

"Here's two nuts that I've named; now watch them, boys, till we see how they'll make out the gether." With that he laid them in the turf blaze, and they burned peaceably till they fell into ashes.

"Good luck to them, whoever they are," says Dan O'Brien. "What names had they, Larry?"

"Tim Connor and Norah Cassidy; no less," said Larry, with a mischievous grin.

Dan's face darkened; he gave a short laugh, but said nothing. Norah, whatever got into her I don't know: but she speaks up with spirit.

"You have brought me such luck, you must name my apple for me, Larry."

"Troth, I will," says Larry. "It's done."

Norah counted the pips. "We'll marry," cries she. "Tell me, Larry, who it is."

Putting his hand to his mouth, he said in a loud whisper that we all heard: "Tim Connor."

"Hold your tongues," says Kitty. "Norah, I'm fashed wid your noise. It's a little respect ye have for old friends."

"Uncle," says Dan, suddenly, "I'll go back to America with you. I'll not say no to you any longer: my mind's made up—and, boys, if I am living and well, it is there I shall be this night next year. So if that is punch you are serving, Susan, I'll take a drop to drink to the future in."

Norah's fun seemed over for that night. She made a great show of throwing an apple-paring over her shoulder, and tried to laugh when she put her hand into the empty dish three times when she was blindfolded; but the red rose had left her cheek, and there was a frozen look about her when she said good-night to us all that made me feel uneasy.

We had a good job of spinning to do that winter, and my mother being old and poorly, I looked after the meals beside; so it was nearly a week before I had the chance of getting to Kitty's again. Susy was backwards and forwards with a drawing of tea or a cake of white bread for my mother, and I asked her after Norah.

"She's middling," says Susy. "Mother herself thinking she's got a fever, and drenches her with balm tea. But Dan O'Brien's trip to America is working on her more than a fever would, and a word from him would be more to her than all the teas my mother will ever brew."

"Did Norah tell you so?" I asked.

"No," says Susy; "it's not her way to speak out her mind. But as sure as grass grows and water runs, it's that that's ailing her."

"If that be true, it's myself won't stand by and see poor Norah's heart break," I says to Susan; "for I knew they just doted upon one another."

In the evening I went over to Larry Doolan's mother's, where Dan and his Uncle Peter were stopping. "Good evening to ye all, and good luck be with ye," says I, going into the kitchen, where Dan and Larry with a neighbour or two were sitting round the fire. "I stepped over for a bit of a chat, and to try your new wheel, Mrs. Doolan. Don't stir, boys," says I, as they were rising, "I'll take a seat here in

the corner, and I'll look to you, Dan, to see me safe the length of my own door."

Dan sat down again, and I tried the wheel; and then we began to talk of his going away over to America.

"It's a wild tramp, any way," says Peggy Doolan. "Peter has had luck, but that's not saying that every one will have the same, and sorra a worse wish I have for Dan more than he'll come back to us before the year's out, contented to take what comes among the people he was born with."

"It is kind of you, Mrs. Doolan," says Dan, "to say you will miss me when I'm gone. It's only adding another good turn to the many you've done me. But, if there was nothing else to spur me on, the wish I have to return a little of all the kindness that has been shown to me, an orphan lad, would do it. In America, as I hear, there's a chance for all to do well and get rich, straight as the wind that fills the sails in taking us to the new country."

"Never fear, Dan," said old Peter, "there's a chance for you, and a good one, too. And Mrs. Doolan will be the first to call you a sharp-sighted lad for seeing it when you bring her back some of the gold you'll make."

With that I got up and wished them good-night; and reminded Dan that he was to see me home.

"That I will," says Dan, in his ready way. And we went along mighty sociable.

"Will ye wait here a bit, Dan, while I ask after poor Norah?" says I, as we came up to Kitty's door.

"Is she ailing?" he asked, quite startled.

"She got a turn on Halloween, that left her but poorly. Her mother feared she might be taking the fever."

He seemed staggered. "I'll stop outside, Biddy," says he, "for I'd be sorry to disturb Tim Connor. I suppose he is with her."

I lost all patience at this, and I asked him whether he was a fool. "You are searching for briars, Dan O'Brien, when there's roses afore ye. Is Tim Connor going to America, that Norah should grieve for him? You're not worth a tear; and, if I were Norah, sorra a one I'd shed for ye, ye wrong-headed boy."

The poor fellow caught me by the hand. "Is it truth you are speaking, Biddy?—and does Norah think of me?" says he, in a breathless kind of way, as if his throat had a lump in it. "Bless you for this night's work—for you have made a miserable man happy."

"Will ye come in with me, Dan?"

He didn't answer, but followed me like a daft, for I never saw one so upset with hope. When I opened the door the fire was low, and I thought the kitchen was empty; but when the blaze shot up, I saw Norah sitting in a corner, her head on her hands. Dan stood in the shadow of the door, and she only saw me as I went forward.

"I'm glad of the sight of you, Aunt Biddy," says she. "My

mother and Susey are gone over to the Maloneys with their work, and I'm sitting idle here, for the thirl of the wheel makes my head ache."

"I heard you were 'poorly,'" says I. "Has Tim Connor been dancing with Biddy Nowland, and are ye jealous of them?"

"Oh, Aunt Biddy," she gasps, "if you speak of Tim Connor you'll break my heart. That's nearly broken already. But for my foolishness on Allhalloween, it would not be aching as it is."

I don't think she meant to say so much, for she looked confused after the words slipped out. Well, I just pushed Dan forward and stole out myself; and as I shut the door I heard her startled cry that had more of joy than fright in it, and saw him on his knees beside her stool with his arm about her waist, so I knew I had reason to be satisfied, and went home feeling easy.

"Is Dan O'Brien going to America, or not, Susey?" I asked the next morning, when Susan came over to see my mother.

"Yes, he is going," she said; "and mother and Norah are in a great way entirely. He was waiting to speak to my mother, when he got home from the Maloneys' house last night. He wants Norah to wait for him for two years, and if he is not able to do well for her by that time, it will be because his health and strength has failed him."

"And will she wait, Susey?"

"Will she wait? Why, Aunt Biddy, she is clean daft about him. She has scarcely touched her wheel this week past; but it's flying round to-day, and she's been singing like a lark ever since she rose this morning."

My heart was light for Norah's sake, for I never doubted Dan would do well. He had the spirit of it in him, and he had good sense and health, and strength to back him in it. In a fortnight's time he was to start with his Uncle Peter for Liverpool; and he was as hopeful over it as any one that ever drew breath.

When the day came I went to Kitty's to bid him good-bye. We all stood in the kitchen together. Kitty was charging him about taking care of himself; Susy was joking about the elegant dress she was to have as bridesmaid; Norah only was quiet and pale. But she brightened up and looked hopeful whenever he spoke to her.

"Here's the jaunting car, Dan, with your uncle and Larry Doolan," says I, looking out.

"Keep up your heart, Norah darling," whispered Kitty to the poor little thing, leaning white and cold against the old dresser. And then she put her arms around Dan's neck. "Ye were always a son to me," she says; "and whether ye bring an empty purse or a full one, if ye come back with the same heart and character ye go with, I'll think you rich, my boy."

"Good luck to you, Dan, and a speedy return," says Susy; and

when he came to me I couldn't speak to him, for I was choking with tears.

"The blessing of Heaven light on you, Biddy," says he. "You brought us together, and I'll never forget that. I leave her in your care," he whispered in my ear. "It's the greatest trust I can put in a living creature."

I was afraid Nora would be overcome with the parting; but she bore up bravely. She stood white and trembling, but she neither cried nor fainted. And Dan, the fine fellow, leaving a blessing for us all, got into the jaunting car, and went away as full of hope as a spring morning.

But about the ghost, ye ask? Sure and I'm coming to it in the end, young ladies; but ye must just have patience. It was poor Dan's ghost that Nora saw—I tell ye that much.

The next year was a wonderful one for changes. First, my father came home one night after a Fair day, and took to his bed, never to rise from it again. It was near rent day, and he had gone to sell a cow to help to make out what was wanting; but he met with friends, and when he came the length of home there was little left of the price of the cow. After poor father was gone we couldn't keep the place, so mother agreed to go with me and make our home with Kitty, who had plenty of room; and the rest went out into the world.

It was a hard year, and terrible scraping people had to make it out at all. In the beginning of May, Kitty was down with a slow fever, and before June came we had laid her beside my father. Susey was ill when her mother died, and Norah took the fever next. Those were the dark days, when we watched the two poor young things lying side by side, with their minds wandering: sometimes over old sports and games they'd had; sometimes calling on their poor mother, so lately laid in the cold churchyard.

I thank Heaven that there's an end to all things, and there came an end to that black time. Susan rose up, weakly at first, but gaining strength every day. Norah wavered a long time, and then began to mend slowly. She would lie where the sun fell on her, with Dan's letters clasped to her bosom, and never spoke for a whole day together. Myself couldn't write a word to him, not being handy at the pen, to let him know what had happened; and Norah said she was glad he didn't know it. "No news is good news, Aunt Biddy," she would say. "He would be only fretting himself with thinking it over."

It was just at this time that Tim Connor spoke to my mother about Susey. I was taken by surprise, for I believed Tim had no thought of any one but Norah. Somehow I was glad he hadn't taken her liking for Dan to heart; and I knew Susey would make a good wife for him. I feared he had been a bit wild about taking a drop, or the like of that; but he was steady, on the whole. And

Susan was a good girl and just bound up in him ; and she had no fear for the future.

On Michaelmas Day they were married, Susan looking as pretty and blooming as a summer rose. Tim took her home to her father's house, as happy and hopeful both of them as could be. And from that day we found we could trust Tim, and he made her a good husband.

Norah did not get strong. She had a worn, weary, drooping look about her : and when Mike the post came round she'd look after him with feverish eyes. But he never left a letter at our door now.

"Norah, darling," said I to her one day, "why don't you get a letter from Dan?"

As soon as I said it, I saw what was ailing her. She tried to make out that he was not to blame, giving one excuse or another ; but in the midst of speaking she broke into sobs, that betrayed how his silence had told on her heart.

In the first months of his absence, and till after poor Kitty was gone, his letters came as regular as the sun. But they had stopped all at once, as I tell ye, young ladies, and we knew not why ! All we heard of him after that was through a boy called James Branagan, who had learned the saddler's trade in Dublin, and who took a notion to go to America. Jim's mother was a neighbour of ours. He had been in our place to bid his mother good-bye, and had heard about Tim Connor's wedding. And in the letter that his mother got from him from America, he said he had met with Dan O'Brien, and that Dan was doing right well and keeping a store in New York with his Uncle Peter, and wished to be remembered to old friends.

Well, as I say, no news came from either of 'em after that, neither Dan nor Jim. He found later that Jim had taken fresh ship, and gone to California to look for gold ; but that had nothing to do with Dan, and why he never wrote puzzled us all. Poor Norah never let a word about Dan or his neglect slip through her lips from that day ; and the creature had such a quiet way with her of bearing up and asking nobody's help that I couldn't find words to speak to her about him.

When the winter was passing through, we found it hard work to strive on and keep together. Tim Connor, seeing that, offered to take my mother home, and give her a place at his fireside, and we thought it for the best to give up the bit of a house, and try for service.

And so, the time went on, and the next Halloween saw us scattered. Susan married and in her own house ; my mother no longer with a hearth of her own, beholden to Tim Connor for the bit and sup ; but I must give Tim his due and say he never grudged it, or anything else he did for us ; my father and Kitty, God rest them, lying cold under the early snow that whitened their graves. Norah

was with the Widow Branagan, to give her a hand with her winter's spinning. I was elsewhere, doing my best, young and strong yet.

One evening Norah and I had been out together, over at Mary Doolan's. Coming home, I couldn't help feeling desponding like at the changes and the scattering there had been amongst us.

"My poor father and your mother, Norah, darling," says I—"who would have thought they would be lying in their long home the night?"

"Oh, Aunt Biddy, dear," says she, "they're blest, for they are at peace and rest: and many's the one here would be glad to change places with them."

With that she turned and left me; and I stood still, watching her hurry away through the moonlight, her head bowed down. My heart was sore for her, for I knew she had trouble in hers; but I could give her no comfort, for as I told you, she was a shy creature, and would never speak of her own feelings.

The spring came round again, and Norah was still with the Widow Branagan. It's wonderful the comfort she took out of the wheel. It was flying from morning till night, and the widow told me the girl never gave herself a minute's rest, save when she was sleeping.

All this while we never heard from Dan. I could only think that Norah had wrote something to him that had given him offence, or maybe, wounded his feelings; for he was a terrible high-spirited boy. Anyway, he seemed to have forgotten Norah. At times I used to wish I could write: I'd have wrote to old Peter to ask what was up.

My poor white-faced darling, she made no show of what was wearing out her heart, but went round and about the widow's house as kind and beautiful as the breath of summer. It was a happy day for Martha Branagan when she took Norah home, for an own daughter couldn't do more for her. Norah was up in the morning and had her wheel flying at the break of day; and when the widow rose to her breakfast, there was the little stand on the hearth, with its white cloth and tea-cup standing ready for her. It's toasted white bread and new-laid eggs she would serve her up, fit for any lady in the land.

But she had lost all taste for eating herself, you see. It was now again the fall of the year. The wind had begun to whistle through the bare hedges, and there was a dry deserted look in the empty fields and lanes that made the blazing turf-fire the soul of comfort. How long it was since Dan O'Brien left for America, we hardly cared to reckon. I've not taken the note of the time for ye like a calendar, young ladies, but the fifth year was going on. Myself was in a farmhouse, close against Martha Branagan's, and I could see Norah every day. I suppose the poor creature had changed. She was as pretty as ever in my eyes; but there was something about her that kept the boys from offering a word of love to her; they daredn't do it more than if she had been one of the painted saints in the chapel.

She had been a quiet girl always, so there was no difference in regard to that ; but I'm thinking it was a look in her eyes that has said to me many and many's the time, "it's all over," as plain as if her tongue spoke it. But this isn't coming to the ghost ye say, young ladies? Well now, we are close upon him.

It was in the fall of the year, I tell ye. One evening late, I threw my apron over my head and ran over to the widow's. I was afeard I would not see Norah ; for Susey had been ailing for a month or two, and Norah spent every minute she could spare attending to her and looking after the childer.

When I went in at the door, there sat Norah on a little stool by the fire, just as I had seen her on the night I took Dan over with me. "Why, Norah, girl," said I, "what's come to ye that the wheel's not going?—you're surely not resting yourself?"

She smiled, and looked at me. But it was a queer smile and a queer look, and her face was white as my apron.

"Draw up a seat and sit down by me, Aunt Biddy," says she. "I am not fit to be working to-night, and I'm glad you are here to be with me."

As I sat down, she leaned her head over on my knees, and turned up her face to look at me. My heart gave a great thump, for I saw something was amiss out of the common. Her face startled me.

"What's come over ye, darling?" says I. "Have ye heard any ill news?"

"Dan is dead, Aunt Biddy," says she.

"Dead!" says I. "Grace be about us! Mercy forbid!"

"Mercy be praised," says she. "Better for him to be dead than false. I can bear it now, Aunt Biddy."

"But who told you Dan was dead?"

"I've seen him, Aunt," says she. "He appeared to me."

"Seen him! What—seen his ghost?"

"Seen his spirit. Yes."

"The saints be good to us! And when did ye see it?"

"You shall hear it all. To-night at dusk I went over to Susey's, and found her weak and tired working with the baby. I took it from her, and, making her a bowl of good gruel, she supped it while I got the children to bed ; and then she lay down comfortably herself. I promised her I would sit up for Tim, and so I went into the kitchen and sat down by the fire to hush the baby off to sleep. In a little while it was quiet, and I kept it on my knee and threw my apron round it for fear I should waken Susey if I laid it down. I think I must have fallen into a doze as I sat there thinking, but a cool stream of air, blowing in, half roused me. I opened my eyes and saw the stars shining through the half-opened door, and felt the wind raising my hair and lifting the apron off the baby's face. Then I saw Daniel O'Brien standing beside me, or, rather, between me and the door, and there was a hard look on his cold, white face. I can't

tell you how I felt, Aunt Biddy ; just at the first moment I thought it might be himself, and I tried to speak. Then I saw that it was not *him*, but only what was left of him, for the figure was shadowy, and I knew that Dan had died. I suppose I grew dizzy : for I remember a blind swimming coming over me and trying to move without the power ; anyway, when I looked again I was alone, and the wind was blowing the door backward and forward. I was so dazed that I had no power to rise till Tim came home and took the baby from me, wondering at the cold kitchen. 'I was sleeping, I think, Tim,' says I, 'and let the fire go down.' 'Yes, and dreaming too,' says he, 'for you look wild.' And then I ran home here, Aunt Biddy, and I have been in a dream ever since."

Well, I didn't know what to answer her : ghosts is gruesome things to talk of, ye see.

"I must speak out this night, Aunt Biddy," she goes on. "Dan wrote to me his last precious letter just before poor mother was taken with the fever, saying how lonely it was for him over there, and how long it was to wait, but that his uncle could not spare him just yet to come for me. Without taking time for thought, Aunt Biddy, I wrote back, asking if I should go out to him—I would if he wished it. I knew my mother had Susey and could spare me. *But that letter he never answered.* I can't tell you the shame that has been mine, Aunt Biddy, for I saw I had gone too far and turned him against me : it has just been like a burning fire of agony in my breast. But now that he's dead he can't think ill of me more, and to-night I have been able to cry. Nobody knows what the sweet comfort of tears is to those who can shed them."

I rose up with that, pitying her with all my heart. "Norah," says I, "my head feels staggered and confused, but I'll go over and get to bed. When I am at my prayers maybe the rights of it will come to me."

She kissed me, and seemed more like the girl she was before her mother died ; and away I went down the road with my heart in my mouth. I had crossed the lane by Kitty's old house, and was close at the stile when a man springs over it ; and I, what with the ghosts in my mind and other miseries, was so flabbergasted that I lays hold of him, just to keep me on my feet.

"I ask your pardon," says he.

"Saints in glory !" says I. And but for feeling he was flesh and blood, I should never have kept my hold. For it was the voice of Dan O'Brien.

"Why, is it you, Biddy ?" he cries. And then, after a few words between us, a great light burst upon me. There was some misapprehension ; but I didn't yet quite see what.

"Will you come with me, Dan, and see Norah ?" I says. "I'm going to her."

"Would you take me to see another man's wife ?" he asks, looking

at me sternly. "I have seen her already once to-night, with her child in her arms."

"Norah Cassidy is not any man's wife," says I, just as stern in my turn. "She has been faithful to you, Dan O'Brien, and always will be. The child you saw in her arms was her sister Susey's, who married Tim Connor years ago."

The grip that he took of my arm was something to be felt. We stood against the stile, him and me, and had it out in a few short words. *He had never had Norah's letter at all*—the one she told me she had written, offering to go out—maybe through some misdirection: and that idiot, Jim Branagan, had told him it was Norah Tim Connor had married. Leastways he had said Mrs. Cassidy's daughter—and Dan took it to be nobody but Norah. So he never wrote to her again, and had believed all this while that she was Tim's wife.

"Will ye come and see her *now*, Dan?" says I. "Her heart's just broke for ye, and she believes you dead."

I trembled so when we reached Martha Branagan's that I could hardly lift the latch. The widow was not come in yet, and Norah was alone sitting as before. As to Dan, I could hardly keep him back.

"Are you back, Aunt Biddy!" cries Norah.

"Yes, darling, thanks be to goodness. I'm back, and I've brought good news for you."

"But what's the matter?" she asks. "How strange you look!"

Well, with that I took to laughing and crying, like a simpleton; and then I screamed to relieve myself. And the last I saw of them as I shut the door, he was kneeling beside her, as she sat on the stool in the blaze, with his arm round her waist, just as I had seen them that night years before.—And I see you be well through with the apples, young ladies; and I hope ye have not eaten them. Not a ghost, after all! ye say. Was there ever the gratitude of that? Why, don't I tell ye that she took him for a ghost? And a ghost he looked, and no better, so shadowy was he and thin. And did they marry, you want to know? In course they married. And it's a plentiful and genteel home they've got, for Dan had prospered, and two or three childer to the fore; and they are as happy, young ladies, as the day's long.



A MYSTERIOUS VISITOR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

(Reprinted.)

ON Monday morning, the 11th of May, 1857—the year, as the reader may remember, that England was destined to be shaken to its centre with the disastrous news of the rising in India—there sat in one of the quiet rooms of Enton parsonage a young and pretty woman, playing with her baby. It was Mrs. Ordie. The incumbent of Enton was Dr. Ling, an honorary canon of the county cathedral. Mrs. Ling was from India: her family connexions, uncles, brothers, and cousins, had been, or were, in the civil or military service of Bengal. Consequently, as the daughters of Dr. Ling had grown towards womanhood, they were severally shipped off, with high matrimonial views, according to a fashion that extensively prevails.

Miss Ling, Louisa, had gone out first, and had secured Captain Ordie. Constance went next, and espoused Lieutenant Main, to the indignation of all her relatives, both at home and out, for she was a handsome girl, and had been set down for nothing less than a major. The third daughter, Sarah Ann, very young and pretty she was, went out the following year, with a stern injunction not to do as Constance had done.

Before Sarah Ann could get there, Mrs. Ordie's health failed, and she was ordered immediately to her native climate. Upon landing, she proceeded to Enton. The voyage had been of much service to her, and her health was improved. And there we see her sitting, on the morning of the 11th of May, nearly twelve months after her arrival, playing with her infant, who was nine months old. In August she and the child were going back to India.

Mrs. Ordie was much attached to this child, very anxious and fidgety over it: her first child had died in India. She fancied, this morning, that it was not well, and had been sending in haste for Mrs. Beecher, who lived close by, just beyond the garden. The honorary canon and the rest of the family had gone to spend a week in the county town.

Mrs. Beecher came in without her bonnet. She had been governess to Louisa and Constance, had married the curate, and remained the deeply-attached friend and adviser of the Ling family. In any emergency Mrs. Beecher was appealed to.

"I am sure baby's ill," was Mrs. Ordie's salutation. "I have been doing all I can to excite her notice, but she will keep her head down. See how hot her cheeks are."

"I think she is sleepy," said Mrs. Beecher. "And perhaps a very little feverish."

"Do you think her feverish? Whatever shall I do? Good mercy, if she should die as my other baby did!"

"Louisa," remonstrated Mrs. Beecher, "do not excite yourself causelessly. I thought you had left that habit off."

"Oh, but you don't know what it is to lose a child; you never had one," returned Mrs. Ordie, giving way to her excitement. "If she dies, I can tell you I shall die with her."

"Hush," interrupted Mrs. Beecher. "I believe there is little, if anything, the matter with the child, except her teeth, which renders children somewhat feverish. But if she were dangerously ill, you have no right to say what you have just said."

"Oh yes, I have a right, for it is truth. I would rather lose everything I possess in the world, than my baby. What a long while Mr. Percival is!" she added, walking to the window and looking out.

"You surely have not sent for Mr. Percival?"

"I surely have. And if he does not soon make his appearance, I shall send again."

Mrs. Ordie had always been of most excitable temperament. As a girl, her imagination was so vivid, so prone to the marvellous, that story books and fairy tales were kept from her. She would get them unknown to her parents, and wake up in the night, shrieking with terror at what she had read. Hers was indeed a peculiarly active brain. It is necessary to mention this, as it may account, in some degree, for what follows.

There was really nothing the matter with the child, but Mrs. Ordie insisted that there was, and made herself miserable all the day. The surgeon, Mr. Percival, came: he saw little the matter with it either, but he ordered it a warm bath, and sent in some medicine—probably distilled water and sugar. Mrs. Beecher came in again in the evening. Mrs. Ordie hinted that she might as well remain for the night, to be on the spot should baby be taken worse.

The curate's wife laughed. "I think I can promise you that there will be no danger, Louisa. You may cease to torment yourself, and go to sleep in peace."

"If anything does happen, I shall send to call you up."

The Lings kept four servants. Two of these, a man and maid, were with their master and mistress; the other two were at home. And there was also the child's nurse. After Mrs. Beecher left, Mrs. Ordie crept along the corridor to the nurse's room, where the baby slept, and found the nurse undressing herself.

"What are you doing that for?" she indignantly exclaimed. "Of course you will sit up to-night, and watch by baby."

"Sit up for what, ma'am?" returned the nurse.

"I would not leave the child unwatched to-night for anything. My other baby died of convulsions; they may also attack this one.

Convulsions are so uncertain: they come on in a moment. I have ordered Martha to sit up in the kitchen and keep hot water in readiness."

"Why, ma'am, there's no cause in the world for it," remonstrated the surprised nurse. "The baby is as well as well can be, and has never woke up since I laid her down at eight o'clock."

"She shall be watched this night," persisted Mrs. Ordie. "So dress yourself again."

"I must say it's a shame," grumbled the nurse, who had grown tired of her mistress's capricious ways, and had privately told the other servants that she did not care how soon she left the situation. "I'd remain up for a week, if there was need of it, but to be deprived of one's natural rest for nothing, ma'am, is too bad. I'll sit myself in the old rocking-chair, if I must stay up," added the servant, half to herself, half to her mistress, "and get a sleep that way."

Mrs. Ordie's eyes flashed anger. The fact was, the slavery of Eastern servants had a little spoiled her for the independence of European ones. She accused the girl of every crime that was unfeeling, short of child murder, and concluded by having the infant's crib carried down to her own room. She would sit up herself and watch it.

The child still slept calmly and quietly, and Mrs. Ordie sat quietly by it. But she began to find it rather dull, and she went to the book-shelves and took down a book. It was then striking eleven. Settling the lamp on a small table at her elbow, she began to read.

She had pitched upon the "Vicar of Wakefield." She had not opened the book for years, and she read on with interest, all her old pleasure in the tale revived. Nearly half an hour had elapsed when she suddenly heard footsteps on the gravel path outside, advancing towards the house, and she looked off and listened. The first thought that struck her was, that one of the servants had been out without permission, and was coming in at that late hour; which, as her watch, hanging opposite, told her, was twenty-five minutes past eleven. But she had not heard the bell ring. It must be explained that Enton parsonage stood back from the high road and was surrounded by trees. Two iron gates gave ingress to it from the road. They were far apart, for the house was low and long; the kitchens, forming a right angle with the house, projected out, their windows looking sideways on the broad half-circular gravel path that led from one gate to the other. The entrance-porch was near the kitchens. At the back of the house stood the smaller house of the curate; a narrow pathway leading to it from the parsonage. *That* house faced the side lane, into which lane its small iron gate opened. These gates, the rector's two large ones and the curate's small one, were always locked at sunset, and the premises were then deemed secure. There was no other entrance to them whatever, and all three of the gates were lofty and spiked at the top, preventing the possibility of

any marauder's climbing over. Did any friends come to either of the two houses after the gates were locked, they had to ring for admittance.

Mrs. Ordie heard these footsteps in the stillness of the night, and her eyes instantly glanced at her watch. Twenty-five minutes after eleven. Who was it, at this late hour? But, even as the question passed through her mind, an expression of astonishment rose to her face; her eyes dilated, she drew in her breath and listened intently. If ever she heard the footsteps of her husband, she thought she heard them then.

Yes, yes! It was impossible to mistake his sharp, firm step, which she had never heard since she left him in Calcutta. It was very close now, nearly underneath her window. With a cry of joy she arose and opened it.

"George, dear George! I knew your step. Whatever has brought you home?"

There was no answer. The footsteps were still advancing, and Mrs. Ordie leaned out. He had come in at the further gate, had passed along the front of the house, and was now underneath her window. She saw him distinctly in the light cast on the path from the kitchen. There was no mistaking him for any other than Captain Ordie, and he wore his regimentals. He lifted his face, she saw it clearly in the light, and looked at her. Then he went on and stepped inside the porch. She called to him again.

"George, you did not hear me. Don't knock, baby's ill. Wait a moment, and I will let you in."

Closing the window, she sprang to the door. Her lamp was not suitable for carrying, and she would not stay to light a taper: she knew every stair well. But she was awkward at the fastenings of the front door, and found she could not undo them in the dark, so ran into the kitchen. The cook, sitting up in obedience to her orders, was lying back in a chair, her feet stretched out upon another. She was fast asleep and snoring. A large fire burnt in the grate, and two candles were alight on the ironing-board underneath the window, one of them guttering down. Servants will be wasteful.

"Martha! Martha!" she exclaimed, "rouse yourself. My husband's come."

"What!" cried the woman, starting up in affright, and evidently forgetting where she was. "Who's come, ma'am?"

"Come and open the hall door. Captain Ordie is there."

She snatched one of the candles from the table, and went on to the door again. The servant followed, rubbing her eyes.

The door was unlocked and thrown open, and Mrs. Ordie drew a little back to give space for him to enter. No one came in. Mrs. Ordie looked out then, holding the candle above her head. She could not see him anywhere.

"Take the light," she said to the maid, and stepped beyond the

portico. "George!" she called out, "where are you? The door is open." But Captain Ordie neither appeared nor answered.

"Well, I never knew such an extraordinary thing!"

"Ma'am," said the servant, who began now to be pretty well awake, "I don't understand. Did you say anybody was come?"

"My husband is come. Captain Ordie."

"From Mrs. Beecher's?" asked the woman.

"Mrs. Beecher's, no! What should bring him at Mrs. Beecher's? He must have come direct from Portsmouth."

"But he must have come to the door here from the Beechers'," continued the servant. "He couldn't have come any other way. The gates are locked, ma'am!"

In her wonder at his appearance, this fact had not struck Mrs. Ordie. "One of them must have been left unfastened," she said, after thinking. "That was very careless, Martha. It is your place to see to it, when Richard is out. Papa once turned a servant away for leaving the gates open at night."

"I locked both the gates at sundown," was the woman's reply. "And the key's hanging up in its place in the kitchen."

"Impossible," thought Mrs. Ordie. "Where is Susan?"—alluding to the other servant at home.

"Susan went to bed at ten o'clock, ma'am."

"It is not possible that the gates can have been locked, Martha. The captain came in by the upper one, the furthest from here. I heard him the minute he put his foot on the gravel, and knew his step. You must have thought you locked them. George!" added Mrs. Ordie, in a louder tone. "George!"

There was no answer. No sound whatever broke the stillness of the night.

"Captain Ordie!" she repeated. "Captain Ordie!"

The servant was laughing to herself, taking care that her young mistress did not see her. She believed that Mrs. Ordie had dropped asleep, and had *dreamt* she heard somebody on the gravel.

"I know what 'it is," cried Mrs. Ordie, briskly. "He has never been here before; and, finding the door was not immediately opened to him, has gone on to Mr. Beecher's, thinking this the wrong house."

She ran down the narrow path as she spoke, which branched off round by the kitchen window; the maid followed her. It was a light night.

But nothing was to be seen of George Ordie. The curate's house, a small one, presented the appearance of a dwelling whose inmates are at rest; the blinds were drawn before the windows, and all was still. Mrs. Ordie ran over probabilities in her mind, and came to the conclusion that he could not have gone there. The Beechers were early people, and had no doubt been in bed an hour ago. Had her husband knocked there, he would be waiting at the door still, for they had not had time to come down and let him in.

"It could only have been fancy, ma'am," cried Martha.

"Silence," said Mrs. Ordie. "How can it have been fancy? I heard my husband, and saw him."

"Well, ma'am, I argue so from the gates being fast. He couldn't have got over 'em, because of the spikes."

"The gates cannot be fast," returned Mrs. Ordie, "and it is foolish of you to persist in saying so—only to screen your own carelessness."

"I wish you'd just please to look at the gates," retorted Martha.

"I will," said Mrs. Ordie, anxious to convict Martha to her face. "It is an utter impossibility that Captain Ordie can have come in at a high, locked gate, with spikes on the top; he would not attempt to do so. He would have rung the bell."

"That's what I say," answered Martha. "I dreamt t'other night," she muttered, as she followed her mistress, "that a man came down that there path with lovely gownd pieces to sell: I might just as well have riz up the house, and had *him* looked for."

They gained the broad walk, and proceeded round towards the further gate. It was locked. Martha sniffed.

"Why, it is like magic!" uttered Mrs. Ordie.

"I was certain about its being locked, ma'am. And that's why I say it must be fancy."

Mrs. Ordie was indignant. "Is this gate fancy?" she said, shaking it, in her anger. "Don't tell me again that my husband is fancy. How could I have seen and heard him if he were not come? Captain Ordie!" she called out, once more. "George! where can you have gone to?"

"Come to the other gate, Martha."

They retraced their steps, Mrs. Ordie looking in all directions for a gleam of scarlet, and reached the other gate. It was locked. Mr. Beecher's gate was locked. Then she went about the garden, and looked and called: but there was no trace of Captain Ordie. The servant walked with her, half amused, half provoked.

"Can he have slipped in-doors," murmured Mrs. Ordie, "while we went round to the Beechers?" And she went in to look, taking the opportunity to glance at her child. But Captain Ordie was nowhere to be seen, and she had never been so much perplexed and puzzled in all her life.

"Then he must have gone on, as I thought, to Mr. Beecher's," was her last solution of the enigma. "They were possibly up, and let him in directly. And they are keeping him there till morning, that he may not disturb us, knowing that baby is ill."

"But about the gate," interrupt 1 the servant, returning to her stumbling-block, "how could he ha. e got through it?"

"I know he did get through it, and that's enough," responded Mrs. Ordie, disposing summarily of the difficulty. "Soldiers are venture-some and can do anything. I will go and fetch him. You stop here, Martha, and listen to baby."

Once more Mrs. Ordie sped to the curate's. She knocked at the door, and stood back to look up at the house. "They have put him into their spare bed," she soliloquised; "Mrs. Beecher has kept it made up this fortnight past, expecting their invalid from India. My goodness! I never thought of it! they have no doubt come together, in the same ship. George may have gone to Calcutta; and, finding James Beecher was coming, must have got leave, all in a hurry, and accompanied him."

Picking up some bits of gravel, she threw them at Mrs. Beecher's bed-room window. This brought forth the curate in his nightcap, peeping through the curtains.

"It is I, Mr. Beecher. Have you got Captain Ordie here?"

"Make haste, Anne," cried the curate, turning his head round to speak to his wife. "It is Mrs. Ordie. Perhaps the child is in a fit."

"My husband," repeated Mrs. Ordie. "He is here, is he not?"

"Yes; directly," answered the curate, imperfectly understanding, but opening the casement about an inch to speak.

"Is she really worse, Louisa?" exclaimed Mrs. Beecher, who now appeared at the window. "I will soon be with you."

The curate, believing the matter to be settled, drew in his nightcap. But Mrs. Ordie's voice was again heard. "Mr. Beecher! I want you."

"Dress yourself, my dear," cried Mrs. Beecher to him, in a flurry.

"I dare say they want you to go for Mr. Percival. If the baby is really worse, and it is not Louisa's fancy, I shall never more boast of knowing children. She is calling again."

Mr. Beecher re-opened the casement. "I am putting on my clothes, Mrs. Ordie. I am coming."

"But you need not do that. Has your brother arrived?"

"Who?"

"Your brother: James Beecher."

"No. Not yet."

"Some ship is in: it has brought my husband. Tell him I am here."

"We'll be down in a minute," called out Mr. Beecher, and making desperate haste. "Anne, Captain Ordie's come."

"Captain Ordie!" exclaimed Mrs. Beecher.

"Mrs. Ordie says so."

"Then we shall have James here to-morrow. How very unexpected Captain Ordie's arrival must have been to his wife? And to find his child ill!"

Louisa Ordie waited. Mrs. Beecher came down first, in a large shawl, her bonnet tied over her nightcap. They began to speak at cross purposes.

"Is he coming? Have you told him?" impatiently asked Mrs. Ordie.

"My dear, yes. But he had gone upstairs in slippers, and his

shoes were in the back kitchen. Captain Ordie's arrival must have taken you by surprise."

"I never was so much surprised in my life," answered Mrs. Ordie, standing still, and not offering to stir. "I heard his footstep first, and knew it, even in the distance. I am so glad! He must have come with James Beecher."

"Ay, we shall have James here to-morrow. But, my dear, let us not lose time. Is the child very ill?"

"She is not worse; there is no hurry," answered Mrs. Ordie, planting her back against a tree, as deliberately as if she meant to make it her station for the night, and gazing up at the casement which she knew belonged to their spare bedroom. Mrs. Beecher looked at her in surprise.

"Will he be long?" she resumed. "There's no light."

"He will be here directly," said Mrs. Beecher; "he is finding his shoes. I suppose Kitty put them in some out-of-the-way place, ready for cleaning in the morning."

Another pause, and the curate appeared.

"Oh, Mr. Beecher, you need not have got up," was Mrs. Ordie's greeting. "I am sorry to give you all this trouble."

"It is no trouble. Do you want me to go for Mr. Percival?"

"You are very kind, but we shall not require the doctor to-night: at least I hope not. I have been watching her myself: I had her brought down to my own room. Nurse behaved shamefully over it, and I gave her warning."

"Pray let us go on and see how she is," said Mrs. Beecher, never supposing but they had been called up by the state of the child.

"When he comes. You say he will not be long. Had he undressed?"

"Had who undressed?"

"My husband."

Mrs. Beecher stared at her in amazement. "I do not understand you, Louisa. For whom are we waiting here?"

"For my husband, of course. You say he is finding his shoes."

Both Mr. and Mrs. Beecher thought her child's illness was turning her crazy. They looked at her, and at one another.

"My dear, you are mystifying us," spoke the wife, drawing her shawl tighter round her shoulders. "Is your husband coming out; here; into the garden? Are we to wait here for him?"

"Why, you know he is coming out, and of course I shall wait for him. Only think, he wore his regimentals!"

"His regimentals!"

"Yes. Just as if he were on duty."

"Where is Captain Ordie?" interposed the curate.

"Well, that's a sensible question, from you," laughed Mrs. Ordie. "I suppose he is in your spare bedroom, though I see no light. Or else hunting for his shoes in your kitchen."

"Child," said Mrs. Beecher, taking hold of her tenderly, "you are not well. I told you to-day what it would be, if you excited yourself. Let us take you home."

"I will not go without my husband. There. And what makes him so long? I shall call to him. Why, you have locked the door!" she exclaimed. "You have locked him in."

"Locked who in, child?" said Mrs. Beecher. "There's nobody in the house but Kitty."

"My husband is there. Did he not come to you?"

"No, certainly not. We have not seen him."

"Mr. Beecher," she impatiently uttered, "I asked you, at first, whether my husband had come here, and you said yes."

"My dear young lady, I must have misunderstood you. All I heard, with reference to Captain Ordie, was, that he had come: I supposed to your house. He has certainly not been to ours."

"Then what were you talking of?" she reproachfully asked of Mrs. Beecher. "It was shameful to deceive me so! You said he had gone upstairs in slippers, and was finding his shoes. You know you did."

"My dear child, I was speaking of Mr. Beecher. I did not know you thought your husband was here. Why did you think so?"

"If he is not here, where is he?" demanded Mrs. Ordie. "You need not look at me as though you thought I was out of my senses. Do you mean to say you have not seen Captain Ordie?"

"We have not, indeed. We went to bed at ten, and heard nothing, until you threw the gravel at the window."

"Where can he be? What can he have done with himself?"

"Did he leave you to come to us? When did he arrive?"

"It was at twenty-five minutes after eleven. I was sitting by baby, reading the 'Vicar of Wakefield.' All at once I heard footsteps approaching from the upper gate, and I knew they were my husband's. I looked out, and saw him, and called to him; he did not seem to hear me, but went in to the portico. I ran down to let him in, and to my surprise he was not there, and I thought he must have come on to you."

"Then you have not yet spoken with him?" exclaimed Mr. Beecher.

"Not yet."

"Are you sure it was Captain Ordie? Who opened the gate to him?"

"No one. The gate is locked. There is the strange part of the business."

"My dear Mrs. Ordie! I fear it must be all a mistake. Captain Ordie would not arrive here on foot, even if he landed unexpectedly; and he could not have got through a locked gate. Perhaps you were asleep."

"Nonsense," peevishly replied Mrs. Ordie; "I was as wide awake

as I am now. I had come to that part where the fine ladies from town had gone in to neighbour Flamborough's and caught them all at hunt-the-slipper, Olivia in the middle, bawling for fair play. The ballad 'Edwin and Angelina' came in a few pages before, and that I skipped. I assure you I was perfectly awake."

"I do not think it possible to have been anything but a delusion," persisted Mr. Beecher.

"How a delusion?" angrily asked the young lady; "I do not know what you mean. If my hearing could play me false, my sight could not. I heard my husband, and saw him, and spoke to him. He was in his regimentals: were they a delusion?"

"This is very strange," said Mrs. Beecher. "He would not be likely to travel in his regimentals."

"It is more than strange," was Louisa Ordie's answer, as she looked dreamily about. "He is in the grounds, somewhere, and why he does not come forward, I don't know."

The mystery was not cleared up that night. No Captain Ordie made his appearance. The next day Mrs. Ordie sent for her father, to impart to him the strange circumstance. He adopted his curate's view of the affair; and, indeed, the universal view. Mrs. Ordie was much annoyed at their disbelief; and she actually, in spite of her friends, had Captain Ordie advertised for, in the local papers: he *was* in England, she said, and it would be proved so.

When letters next arrived from India, there was one from Captain Ordie, which gave proof positive that he was not, and had not been in Europe. Mrs. Ordie was perplexed.

The weeks went on, and the time fixed for the departure of Mrs. Ordie and her child drew near. But meanwhile the disastrous news had arrived of the outbreak in India of that dreadful mutiny, and it was deemed advisable to postpone it.

She was sitting one day in a gloomy mood. She had not heard from her husband for some time (his last letter was dated April); and now, as she found, another mail was in, and had brought no news from him. The rising at Delhi, where Captain Ordie was quartered, was known to her, but not, as yet, the details of its more disastrous features. She did not fear his having fallen: had anything happened to him, Mr. Main, or one of her sisters, would have written. They were all at Delhi.

As she thus sat, Mrs. Beecher came in, looking very pale and sad. Dr. and Mrs. Ling had gone off in their pony carriage to the county town, to pick up news. They were extremely uneasy.

"Another mail has been in these two days!" she exclaimed to Mrs. Beecher. "News travels slower to Enton than anywhere. Have you heard from James Beecher? You don't look well."

"James is come," replied the curate's wife. "He came overland."

"And you have been worrying yourselves that he is dead!" retorted Louisa. "How are things going on, over there?"

"Very badly. They cannot be worse."

"Does he know anything of George?" continued she. "I think he might spare just a minute from his fighting to write to me. What is the matter with you? You have not brought bad news for me?" she added, her fears touched, and rising in excitement. "Oh, surely not! Not for me!"

"James's news is altogether very dispiriting," returned Mrs. Beecher, at a loss how to proceed with her task. "My husband is gone to bring Dr. and Mrs. Ling back. We thought you might like them to be at home."

"Has George fallen in battle? Have those half-caste rebels shot him down? Oh——"

"Pray be calm, Louisa!" implored Mrs. Beecher; "if ever you had need of calmness in your life, you have need of it now."

"Is he wounded? Is he dead?" interrupted Mrs. Ordie, with a bitter shriek. "Oh, George! dearest George! and I have been calling you hard names for not writing to me! What is it?"

"There is a great deal to be told, my child. James Beecher was at Delhi in the midst of it."

Louisa suddenly rose and flew from the room. Mrs. Beecher, supposing she had gone to her chamber, went after her; but could not find her there. She had gone out of the house.

A thin man, looking fearfully ill, fair once, but browned by an Eastern sun, was lying on the sofa in the curate's parlour, when a young, excited woman came flying in.

"Mr. James Beecher," she uttered, seizing his hands imploringly, "when did it happen? I am Mrs. Ordie."

"Has my sister-in-law told you—anything?" he hesitated.

"Yes, yes. I know the worst. I want particulars."

He had risen into an upright posture, though he could scarcely support himself, and she sat down beside him. He was a church missionary, a widower with children. "Are you sure that you can bear the details?" he asked, believing, from her words, that she knew the general facts.

"I am sure. Omit nothing. You were at Delhi."

"I went there in the spring, to say farewell to some friends, ere I came home. At Delhi I was taken worse, and lay ill there."

"But about the rising?"

"I am coming to it. On the second Monday in May, after breakfast, bad news came in. The 3rd Light Cavalry had dashed in from Meerut, fully armed, and were slaughtering the Europeans. Eighty-five of this regiment had been tried by court-martial at Meerut, for refusing to handle the greased cartridges, and sentenced to imprisonment. Their sentences were read out to them on parade on the previous Saturday, the 9th, and they were sent to gaol. On the 10th, Sunday, the regiment rose, released the prisoners, massacred the European officers, their wives and children, and on the 11th came

to Delhi, in open revolt. I struggled up, dressed myself, joined the friends I was staying with, and we waited further news. It came in too soon. The mutineers had gone towards Deriowgunge, shooting all the officers they encountered. The brigadier ordered out the 54th Native Infantry and two guns; and, I believe, a detachment of another regiment; but accounts varied. They met the rebels just outside the Cashmere gate, and it was all up, for the Sepoys deserted their officers, and shook hands with the Sowars. Every officer was killed. Treacherous, cowardly wretches! they did not spare one."

She was biting her lips, and striving for calmness, determined to hear all. "Did the officers make no resistance?"

"All that they could make, but they were unarmed," he answered. "The next account that came in was, that the natives had risen and joined the insurrection, were firing the bungalows at Deriowgunge, and ransacking the European residences. The troopers were raging about, destroying life; and when their work was done, the Goojours,* who had collected in great numbers, as they were sure to do, followed in their wake, and pillaged everything, even to the matting. The bank was rifled."

Mr. Beecher paused, wondering whether he ought to proceed, but her studied calmness deceived him.

"No one knew where to fly for refuge, or what to do: none knew where to put the officers' wives and children. Many were taken to the Flagstaff Tower; but it was thought unsafe and had to be abandoned. Some escaped—many, I hope—in conveyances, or on horseback, or on foot. Some of the officers retreated to the cantonment outside the gates; but the troopers got there when night came, and killed them and their wives and children."

"Were any of *my* family with them?" she asked, still with unnatural composure.

"No. I will tell you. Before mid-day, the ladies of our house, my host's wife and her cousin, escaped to a close hut, or outhouse, and I managed to hobble there with them. I don't know how I did it: but it is astonishing the artificial strength that fear brings out. Others also took refuge there, about half-a-dozen ladies, your two sisters being amongst them, three or four children, and a poor little ensign, as ill and weak as I was. We hoped we were in safety; that the rebels would not think of looking for us there; and some old matting, well wetted, was hung up across the entrance, as if to dry. A Sepoy, who was really faithful (and there were many such in the city) sat before it to guard it; many a one, raging after prey, did he turn aside with a well-assumed story that his old mother was in there, dying—let her die in peace."

* A race of a peculiar caste, who congregate round Meerut and Delhi. They have been compared to our gipsy tribes, and live by plunder, even in times of peace. Some years ago a regiment was obliged to be raised especially to keep them under.

"Was my husband there?"

"Not then. No one came near us all that day: they dared not come, for our sakes; and we bore our suspense and apprehension as we best could, not knowing who was living or who dead, of those dearest to us. What a day that was! We had neither food nor drink; the heat of the weather was fearful; and so many of us stowed together, and closely shut up, rendered the air fetid. We thought it could not be less than 110 degrees. This was not the worst; there were the apprehensions of discovery. We men might brave it, at any rate to appearance, but the poor young women! I believe they would have been glad to die as they cowered there, rather than live to encounter an uncertain fate. I strove to speak comfort to them all, but it was difficult; one or two bore bravely up, and cheered the rest. Late at night, under cover of the darkness, Captain Ordie stole in."

She raised a faint cry at the name. "My husband!"

"He told us what he could of the progress of the day—it was horribly bad, yet I believe he softened it for their ears—and then he began to talk of our own situation. It would be impossible, he said, to keep in the same place of concealment another day, and that we had better join a party who were about to make their escape towards Kurnaul. All seized at the idea eagerly, and wished to start without the delay of an instant. Mrs. Holt, my friend's wife, inquired after her husband, whom she had not seen since morning.

"He is safe, and unharmed," replied Captain Ordie. "You will see him when we are fairly off; but it was not thought well for more than one of us to venture here."

"And my husband?" added Mrs. Main, who had done nothing but clasp her baby to her breast all day, and weep silently. "Is he safe?" Captain Ordie answered evasively," continued Mr. Beecher, "and I knew, by his words and by the turn of his face, that poor Main was gone."

"Go on," groaned Mrs. Ordie. "George's turn comes next."

Mr. Beecher hesitated. "I will finish later," he suggested.

"No, finish now. You cannot leave me in this suspense. It would be cruel."

"Captain Ordie spoke of the plan of departure. The officers had but three horses amongst them, and the ladies and invalids were to take it in turn to ride; two, with a child, on each horse. All the party were to keep together. At that moment arose a horrible yell, which we knew proceeded from a Sowar, and one of them appeared at the entrance, tearing down the matting. All the light we had was a night-wick in some oil, but we saw his dark face. The children shrieked; the ladies also, and huddled themselves together in a corner; and Captain Ordie advanced to the entrance, and dealt the man a blow on the temple with the butt-end of his pistol."

"I hope it killed him!" she uttered, her eyes sparkling.

"I think it did, for he lay motionless. Captain Ordie kicked him out of the way, and, throwing himself on his hands and knees, crawled out cautiously to reconnoitre. Alas! we soon heard a struggle outside; two more were upon him."

"And he was struck down! I *know* you are going to tell it me," she uttered, in a low, passionate wail.

Mr. Beecher sat silent, his countenance full of distress.

"Louisa, my darling, be composed," interrupted Mrs. Beecher, who had come in search of her. "You know the worst now."

"Yes, I know the worst," she moaned. "They killed him, there and then."

"They did," whispered Mr. Beecher. "It was instantaneous."

She turned sick, and shook violently. But, by strong control, spoke again. "Finish the history. What became of you, inside?"

"It was all commotion in a moment, dreadful commotion. The poor terrified women attempted to fly; some succeeded, and I hope escaped. Providentially there were only these two troopers; had more been upon us, none would have been left. The first thing I saw distinctly was, that one of them had caught Mrs. Main's infant, and was tossing it on the point of his bayonet. He next seized her."

"Constance?" panted Mrs. Ordie.

"Yes. And killed her. Killed her instantly. Be thankful."

Mrs. Ordie pressed down her eyelids, as if she would shut out some unwelcome sight. "Constance murdered," she moaned. "And you tell me to be thankful!"

"Be ever thankful," impressively spoke the missionary. "Others met with a worse fate."

"Sarah Ann?" she shivered. "What became of her?"

"I am unable to tell you. I trust she escaped. At the moment of Mrs. Main's death, I fainted on the floor where I was lying, and that must have saved my life. When I recovered, not a creature—living—was to be seen. The children were lying about; they had been put out of their misery; two of the ladies, and the ensign. Poor young fellow! he had told us, in the day, that he had no parents or near friends to mourn him, so the loss of a little griff, if they did kill him, would not count for much."

"Dead? All?"

"All. The two ladies were Mrs. Holt and Mrs. Main. Of the other ladies I saw no trace. I trust," he added, clasping his hands fervently, "that they escaped. We shall hear of many miraculous escapes: I pray that theirs may be of the number."

"Now, Louisa, let me take you home," urged Mrs. Beecher. "You do know the worst."

"I must hear all," was the answer, uttered in a tone of frenzy. "If I thought there was a word, a recital, left untold to me, I must get up in the middle of the night, and come and ask for it."

"You have heard all," said Mr. Beecher—"all that I know. My

own escape I will not trouble you with. It was wonderful: and I lost no time in coming home overland."

She leaned back on the sofa and closed her eyes. Mrs. Beecher was thinking of her random words—that she would rather lose everything in the world than her child. But her thoughts had not grasped the dreadful possibility of losing her husband.

"When did this happen?" Mrs. Ordie suddenly asked. "What date?"

"I mentioned it," said Mr. Beecher. "Late on the night of the 11th of May."

She leaned forward breathless, her eyes staring. "How late? The exact hour? Speak?"

"It must have been near half-past eleven. When Captain Ordie came in, we asked him the time (for, strange to say, in our hurried flight, not one of us put a watch about us), and his watch said a quarter past eleven; and we were talking, after that, perhaps ten minutes. It must have been about twenty-five minutes after eleven when he was killed."

"Listen to that!" shrieked Louisa Ordie, seizing Mrs. Beecher by the arm. "It was the very hour I saw and heard him. How was he dressed?" she rapidly asked.

"In full regimentals."

"There! There! Do you believe me now, Mrs. Beecher? Ah! you all ridiculed me then; but you hear it! It was my husband that came down the path here—appearing to me in the moment of his death."

The reader must judge of this mystery as he pleases. It happened; at least, to the positive belief of the lady, here called Mrs. Ordie; as her friends can testify. They reason with her in vain. They point out that twenty-five minutes after eleven in Delhi would not be twenty-five minutes after eleven here: they believe that it was, and could have been, nothing but her own vivid imagination, that her thoughts were probably running on her husband through the "George" in the "Vicar of Wakefield." But Louisa Ordie nevertheless believes, and will believe to the end of time, that it was her husband in the spirit who showed himself to her that unhappy night.



THE HOLLY TREE.

Hurrah, hurrah, for the holly tree,
 Uprearing his head in the frost and snow ;
 Not a jot nor a tittle careth he
 For the cloud and the storm and the winds that blow.
 The roses that grew on the southern wall
 Waxed feeble and few, and we watched them fall.
 The hawthorn hath faded, the lily is gone,
 The skies of December are pallid and wan ;
 But the holly is sturdy, as sturdy can be,
 Hurrah, hurrah, for the holly tree !

Hurrah, hurrah, for the holly tree,
 There never was surely a bonnier one ;
 His prickly armour 'tis good to see,
 And his berries are red in the winter sun.
 His berries are red, aye ruddy are they,
 Though the roses are dead, and the swallow's away.
 The icicles hang, and the tempest is keen,
 But he hath his garment of glittering green.
 Like a king in his glory standeth he,
 Hurrah, hurrah, for the holly tree !

Alack, alack, for the holly tree,
 Laughing and eager there cometh a troop,
 The men to work, and the maidens to see,
 And the children to add to the joyous group.
 And lo, he is left when their labour is o'er,
 Dismantled, bereft of the raiment he wore ;
 And branches are prone on the snow-covered earth
 To be raised with rejoicing, and carried with mirth.
 The spoilers have vanished ; lone shivereth he,
 Alack, alack, for the holly tree !

Heigho, heigho, for the holly tree,
 But his boughs will gleam in the festive hall ;
 And some in the village church may be,
 And some give a grace to the cottage wall.
 O it is well for the holly tree bold
 That he weaveth a spell o'er the young and the old.
 One spray in a girl's soft hair shall glow,
 And one will lie on a grave, I know.
 He shareth the sorrow, he shareth the glee,
 Heigho, heigho, for the holly tree !

SYDNEY GREY.

